



[www.wildidaho.org](http://www.wildidaho.org)

**Idaho Conservation League**

PO Box 844, Boise, ID 83701  
208.345.6933

Governor Otter  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 83720  
Boise, Idaho  
83720

May 5, 2009

RE: Recent bighorn sheep legislation

Dear Governor Otter,

Thank you for your efforts to find a long term solution regarding conflicts between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep. We appreciate all the time and attention your staff spent listening to concerns and suggestions from all stakeholders. Your advisory group was a proactive tool for working collaboratively on this complex issue. We were committed to engaging in this process as we believed it would lead to the best long term solution for all parties concerned. Furthermore, we particularly appreciate your veto of Senate Bill 1175 which would have placed the State of Idaho in a particularly untenable position regarding maintaining future populations of bighorn sheep.

Unfortunately, the passage of Senate Bill 1232 has shifted the direction of state policy in a way counter to this collaborative process, undermining the credibility of the advisory group. Stakeholders were initially called together to offer guidance on state policy, but this legislation preemptively set state policy, codifying a different approach and precluding the need for this advisory group. Furthermore, the basic flexibility the advisory group needs to proceed has been is no longer available. As such, we do not see any benefits for continuing to participate in the advisory council and regretfully withdraw from the collaborative.

Both bighorn sheep, domestic sheep and the Idahoans that value them deserve a better future than the one offered by the current direction. While the advisory process is no longer a feasible venue for this discussion, we still hope to continue a dialogue with individual ranchers, other bighorn sheep advocates, the State Departments of Agriculture and Fish and Game and your office on a long term solution. We believe that this issue will ultimately be resolved by Idahoans working together toward a common solution as you had originally envisioned.

Sincerely,

John Robison  
Public Lands Director

(208) 345-6942 x 13  
jrobison@wildidaho.org

cc: Bonnie Butler, Governor Otter's office  
Jim Unsworth, Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
Brian Oakey, Idaho State Department of Agriculture  
IDFG Fish and Game commissioners  
Suzanne Rainville, Payette National Forest  
Tom Dyer, Idaho Bureau of Land Management