

Controversy grows over possible re-entry of wolves to Calif.

By Ryan Sabalow, Record Searchlight

There may not be American gray wolves in California yet, but U.S. Rep. Wally Herger has joined a group of Republican lawmakers urging the animals' removal from the Endangered Species Act – just in case.

The Chico Republican says he co-sponsored a bill last week with seven other House Republicans pushing for the removal of the wolves' protected status because he's worried that environmental groups may someday try to introduce them in his district as they have in other states.

At least one environmentalist group says wolves should be brought back to the north state, though there are no immediate plans to do so.

"I think restoring wolves to a larger portion (of their original habitat) is a necessity before removing protection for them," said Noah Greenwald, the director of the Center for Biological Diversity's endangered species program in Portland, Ore.

The center's biologists believe that wolves could survive in some north state forests, including parts of Trinity, Siskiyou and Modoc counties.

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