



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

January 6, 2025

Via Email

Mr. Vivek Ramaswamy & Mr. Elon Musk
Co-Directors
Department of Government Efficiency
Trump Transition Team
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Ramaswamy and Mr. Musk,

We write to urge you to exert your influence to nullify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) billion-dollar-plus plan to kill nearly half a million North American barred owls in the forests of the Pacific Northwest to address social competition with spotted owls. If the Interior Department or the DOGE do not unwind this plan, as described in a "Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Barred Owl Management Strategy," we will urge the federal lawmakers to advance a Congressional Review Act resolution to unwind the Record of Decision on this wasteful and doomed federal action.

The plan to kill upwards of 450,000 barred owls over a 30-year time horizon and across vast reaches of public and private lands in three states is thoroughly impractical. It just cannot work, and it won't work. It is a budget buster, with one well-grounded estimate putting the cost of the plan at \$1.35 billion over the intended life of the project.

A recent grant of \$4.5 million by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to the Hoopa Valley Tribe now provides a benchmark cost estimate for the program. Taking the total grant cost and applying it to the number of owls to be killed, the expenditure per owl is \$3,000. With this investment-to-cost ratio as a new baseline for an economic analysis, the cost of killing 450,000 owls over 30 years would be \$1.35 billion.

"It doesn't give me any satisfaction at all to say this, but trying to control barred owls is largely a waste of time," said Eric Forsman, the so-called dean of forest owl biologists and a scientist based in Oregon. "That genie is out of the bottle."

Barred owls not killed in the control area will simply repopulate the nest sites cleansed of birds. Or they will come from British Columbia or other areas where they are not subject to shooting.

The FWS will place itself on a treadmill that requires killing owls over an indefinite time frame. If the FWS undertakes this action, it will cannibalize its other work and its finite resources.

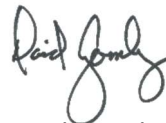
Barred owls have been protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act for more than a century. Like hundreds of other bird species, they have engaged in range expansion. This plan by the FWS goes too far in trying to control natural processes in nature.

The FWS is taking a radical action to kill some owls protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, with no reasonable chance of success and with an eye-popping price tag. We urge you to save American taxpayers more than a billion dollars by nixing this ill-considered scheme. If the DOGE faces resistance on this, we will urge federal lawmakers to invoke the Congressional Review Act to unwind the prior approval of this plan.

Sincerely,



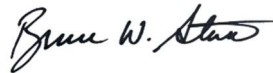
Ed Diehl
Oregon State Representative
District 17



David Gombert
Oregon State Representative
District 10



Virgle Osborne
Oregon State Representative
District 2



Bruce Starr
Oregon Senator-Elect
District 12

Cc: The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Jeff Merkley
The Honorable Cliff Bentz
The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici
The Honorable Janelle Bynum
The Honorable Maxine Dexter
The Honorable Val Hoyle
The Honorable Andrea Salinas
The Honorable Debra Haaland
The Honorable Doug Burgum