



*from the offices of*

**Representative Ed Diehl**

**Representative David Gomberg**

**Representative Virgle Osborne**

**Senator-elect Bruce Starr**

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**Oregon State Lawmakers Join Together to Call for the Federal Government's Barred Owl Kill Plan to be Reversed**

*Four state lawmakers say that the DOGE should ground the plan to kill more than 450,000 barred owls long protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act*

**SALEM, Ore.** – A bipartisan group of Oregon state House members, along with a newly elected state Senator, called on Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy, in their capacity as leaders of the recently formulated Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), to nix the idea of killing nearly half a million barred owls in the Pacific Northwest. The federal plan, detailed in a 300-page Final Environmental Impact Statement and formally approved by the Biden Administration in September 2024, is designed to reduce social competition between range-expanding barred owls and their close cousins, the Northern and California spotted owls.

In criticizing the 30-year kill plan, the set of four rural lawmakers cited its impracticality and its runaway price tag of \$1.35 billion. The lawmakers are **Representative Ed Diehl (R-Linn and Marion counties)**, **Representative David Gomberg (D-Lincoln and Western Benton/Lane counties)**, **Representative Virgle Osborne, (R-Douglas county)** and returning legislator, **Senator-elect Bruce Starr, (R-Yamhill and Polk counties)**.

“The plan to kill upwards of 450,000 barred owls over a 30-year time horizon and across vast reaches of private and public lands in three states is thoroughly impractical,”

wrote the set of four lawmakers. “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.”

The complete letter can be found on Rep. Ed Diehl’s legislative [website](#).

Recently, the Center for a Humane Economy and Animal Wellness Action came up with an estimate of \$1.35 million for the 30-year barred owl kill plan – or about \$45,000,000 a year. That cost estimate is taken from a recent grant of \$4.5 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to the Hoopa Valley Tribe to kill 1,500 of the forest owls. The price tag is \$3,000 per bird, and using that figure as a baseline cost, it will add up to a government expense of \$1.35 billion to execute the broad plan. There is not a pool of thousands of individuals who will volunteer to do the killing, and it is expected that the individuals doing the shooting across millions of acres – including within Crater Lake National Park – will require compensation for the arduous, night-time hunts.

“A billion-dollar price tag for this project should get the attention of everyone on the Trump team concerned about government efficiency,” said **Rep. Ed Diehl**. “Killing one type of owl to save another is outrageous and doomed to fail. This plan will swallow up Americans’ hard-earned tax dollars for no good reason.”

"This simply isn't a sound strategy - fiscally or ecologically," said **Rep. David Gombert**. "As a staunch animal-welfare advocate and a believer in evidence-based policy, I cannot support a plan that calls on taxpayers to front \$45 million a year to cull a protected species. We certainly need to better address the decline we've seen in our spotted owl population, but this is not the way to do it."

“My constituents suffered a great deal when government biologists and radical environmentalists joined together to shut down Douglas County mills in the 1980s and 1990s allegedly to save the spotted owl,” added **Rep. Virgle Osborne**. “The spotted owl wasn’t saved by this gutting of our rural communities, and now the next generation of bureaucrats and environmentalists are telling us the barred owl is the problem. This nonsense has to stop.”

“I cannot believe what a poorly crafted plan the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service developed,” said **Senator-elect Bruce Starr**. “The agency wrote a 300-page environmental impact statement but didn’t tell us a thing about how much it will cost. We now have information to suggest it’s a budget-buster. The incoming administration needs to put an end to this plan.”

Barred owls are a range-expanding North American native species, protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Range expansion is a naturally occurring ecological phenomenon, and it is a core characteristic of many species of birds and mammals, including barred owls.

Precisely because of barred owl movement, the plan cannot succeed because there will be in-migration of surviving barred owls from the control area and from nearby populations, such as B.C.

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