

Ore. lawmaker tells Europeans to butt out

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(AP) -- Oregon state Senate Minority Leader Ted Ferrioli says he doesn't need any advice from foreigners about protecting wolves.

The Republican from John Day, in Eastern Oregon, sent a blunt reply to a South African singer living in Greece, Louise du Toit, when she wrote him to urge opposition to a bill that would remove wolves from Oregon's [endangered species list](#), The Oregonian reported.

Ferrioli said input from European Union residents makes no difference to him.

"You are delusional if you believe U.S. elected officials will bow to activist pressure from outside our borders," the [lawmaker](#) fired back in one of several e-mails he shared with the newspaper. "Let your friends, family and fellow Europeans in their thousands write passionate emails. We will ignore them."

Ferrioli noted the bill's sponsor, state Sen. Doug Whitsett, is a fellow Republican from Klamath Falls, and is a veterinarian who understands the complex issues involved.

"By the way, perhaps I should be writing to EU ministers to stop bailing out Greece. Clearly it has become a haven for morons," Ferrioli wrote to du Toit, adding: "Go away!"

Ferrioli's response enraged wolf advocates from around the country and in Europe, who wrote to demand that he apologize.

"To think that we, as a nation, have voted such rude and closed minded individuals as yourself into office, is unfortunate," wrote Susan Williams of Salt Lake City.

The Oregonian first reported on the dustup Wednesday. On Thursday, Ferrioli did apologize - to Greeks.

Ferrioli sent out a statement in which he offered "my sincere apology to the citizens of Greek extraction wherever they may reside."

He said his earlier words did "not reflect my deep respect and admiration for the great history, traditions, culture and contributions of the Greek people."

He made no additional comment on wolf supporters.

Ferrioli said he's confident his largely rural constituents in Eastern Oregon are adamantly against re-introducing wolves.

His home county, Grant, officially declares itself to be a United Nations-free zone.

"I appreciate the fact people may think I live in the global village," said Ferrioli. "I do not."

Furthermore, he said, Europeans simply "don't have a dog in this fight."

Du Toit, however, wrote back to Ferrioli: "There are NO borders in our fight for endangered species."

Du Toit said in an e-mail to The Oregonian that she has been "fighting vigorously for the suffering wolf populations of Sweden" and that it was "totally natural to me to stand up for the precious wolves of Oregon."

Wolves are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act, so there's debate about whether Whitsett's bill to remove them from the state list would have any immediate impact. But supporters of the bill say it is part of their effort to halt the spread of [wolves](#) and the threat they pose to livestock.

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