

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 1, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairwoman Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As you continue to negotiate the fiscal year (FY) 2024 Appropriations legislation with the Senate and the White House, we write to urge inclusion of an important provision relating to the listing of the gray wolf under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), which was included in the House-passed Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation. This language requires the Secretary of the Interior to reissue the final rule entitled "Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removing the Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) From the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife" (85 Fed. Reg. 69778 (November 3, 2020)).

The gray wolf is recovered by any scientific definition. In Minnesota alone, there are an estimated 2,700 gray wolves, according to the official count by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR). In reality, unofficial estimates indicate the Minnesota DNR is undercounting the population in Minnesota by hundreds if not thousands of wolves. Both estimates exceed the federal delisting goal of 1,250-1,400 gray wolves set when the species was listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1978.

In November 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) followed the science and rightfully removed the species from the ESA list of endangered or threatened species. However, activist politicians and well-heeled advocacy groups continue to ignore science. In 2022, despite overwhelming evidence, an activist judge from the Northern District of California elected to relist the gray wolf.

The statutory purpose of the ESA is to recover species to the point where they are no longer considered "endangered" or "threatened." The gray wolf is currently found in nearly 50 countries around the world and has been placed in the classification of "least concern" globally for risk of extinction by the Species Survival Commission Wolf Specialist Group of the International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN). This indication makes clear that this species is not endangered

nor threatened with extinction. An estimated 7,000 to 11,200 gray wolves live in Alaska and another 60,000 live in Canada. By official estimates, there are now more than 5,000 gray wolves in the lower 48 states.

In 1978, the FWS first listed the gray wolf as an endangered species in the contiguous U.S. with the exception of Minnesota where the wolf was listed as threatened.

Further, in 2013 and again in 2019, FWS published a proposed rule that would remove the gray wolf from the “List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife” range-wide throughout the 48 contiguous states. In both instances, this determination was made after the FWS evaluated the best available scientific information and found the species was thriving.

The Obama Administration also proposed removing protections for gray wolves in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin in 2011. The Obama Administration removed ESA protections for gray wolves in Wyoming, a decision that was upheld in 2017.

The Obama Administration's 2013 and 2011 proposals were challenged with frivolous lawsuits from extremist organizations that don't rely on science or facts and seek to fundraise by keeping species listed under the ESA in perpetuity, regardless of merits and findings that an individual species have been recovered.

We believe that state governments are fully qualified to responsibly manage gray wolf populations and are better able to meet the needs of local communities, ranchers, livestock, and wildlife populations. Delisting the gray wolf under the ESA will allow state wildlife officials to manage wolf populations more effectively – as we have seen is possible in states such as Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Accordingly, we ask that the final Appropriations package for FY2024 include language passed by the House last fall, requiring the Secretary of the Interior to reissue the November 2020 final rule delisting the species.

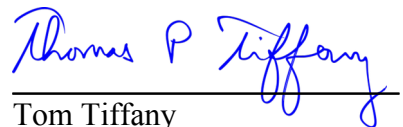
We thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



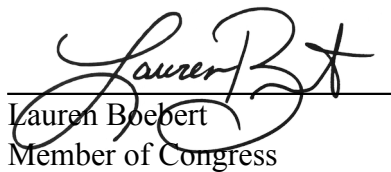
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Pete Stauber  
Member of Congress



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Tom Tiffany  
Member of Congress



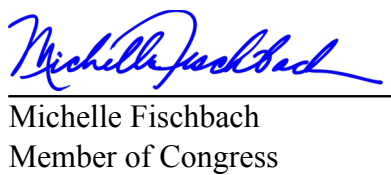
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Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



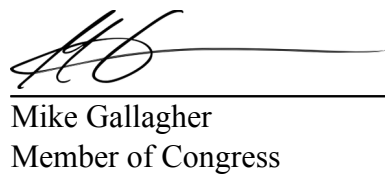
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Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



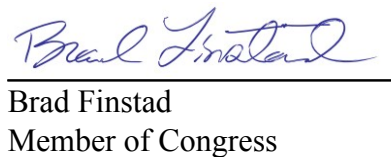
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Michelle Fischbach  
Member of Congress



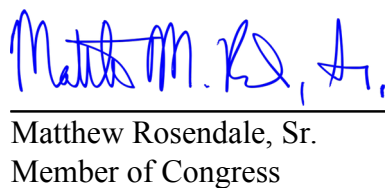
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Mike Gallagher  
Member of Congress



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Brad Finstad  
Member of Congress



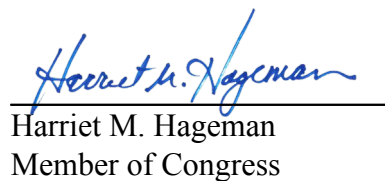
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Matthew Rosendale, Sr.  
Member of Congress



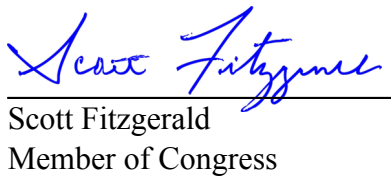
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August Pfluger  
Member of Congress



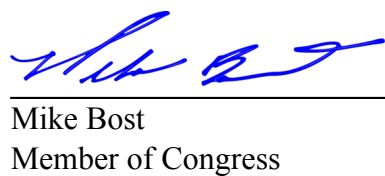
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Harriet M. Hageman  
Member of Congress



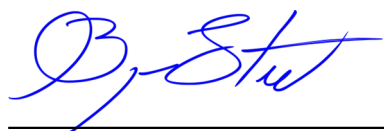
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Scott Fitzgerald  
Member of Congress



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Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



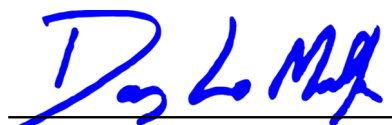
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Bryan Steil  
Member of Congress



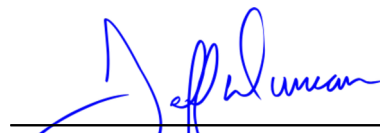
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Glenn Grothman  
Member of Congress



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Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



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Jeff Duncan  
Member of Congress



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Derrick Van Orden  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman, Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member, Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee