

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We write to ask that you revisit the decision to delist the Gray Wolf, as we believe the science supports listing the Gray Wolf as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. We believe the Trump Administration willfully ignored the science of ESA listing decisions in favor of partisan political calculations when it moved to strip federal protections in the fall of 2020.

Since federal protections officially ceased in January 2021, several states, particularly in the Midwest and Northwest, have enacted anti-wolf policies, highlighting the need for strong federal protections. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources authorized a hunt in late February at the height of breeding season, with a quota of 119 wolves, but issued 2,400 hunting tags, almost double the estimated population of wolves in the state. Set to take place over several days, the hunt was called off after 218 wolves, half of which were females and likely pregnant, were slaughtered in just three days.

Idaho allows year-round wolf hunting of adults and pups and permits the use of snares. In April, the Idaho Senate approved a bill that could allow for the killing of up to 90% of the state’s wolf population. Not only do policies like that threaten the long-term stability of the species, but they also enable cruel and inhumane methods of slaughtering.

In Montana, the Governor has recently signed laws enabling the use of choke-hold snares and extending hunting and trapping further into the breeding season. Montana also allows hunters to seek reimbursement for gear and other wolf hunting and trapping-related costs in a bounty-like system. These policies promote cruel and inhumane slaughter for recreation.

Additionally, more than 400 scientists, and growing, have called on the Biden Administration to implement an emergency re-listing of wolves, viewing the new state laws as counter to North American wildlife recovery. According to the scientists, the laws recently enacted in states such as Idaho and Montana ignore the scientific literature on wolf biology and management. And by preventing wolves from being present in numbers that allow them to fill their ecological role, these policies will stymie the healthy functioning of ecosystems.

As an apex species, wolves play a critical role in ecosystems by keeping deer and elk populations in check, which has a positive effect on other plant and animal species. Carcasses from wolves’ prey also provide food for other scavenger species. Recent studies have even found that by killing deer near roads and highways, or even just intimidating them to stay away, wolves are

reducing deer-vehicle collisions by 25%. Removing wolf populations from ecosystems around the country will have a myriad of unintended consequences for countless communities.

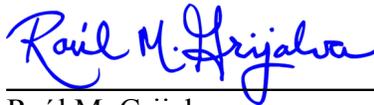
It is clear that after Trump Administration eliminated federal protections, states began accelerating policies that threaten decades of successful wolf recovery efforts across the country. Nearly 80 years after a federal extermination campaign that almost led to the extinction of the species, we cannot tacitly endorse the same practice at a state level. We must protect this critical species, rather than allow cruel and inhumane policies that are actively threatening one of the most successful ESA recovery stories.

We ask that you revisit the Trump administration decision, particularly in light of these new state efforts, and follow the science, rather than partisan aims. We believe the science will find that Gray Wolves are deserving of being relisted as “threatened” under the ESA. We look forward to your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress
Chair, Committee on Natural
Resources



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



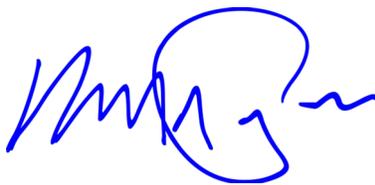
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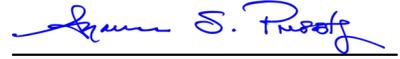
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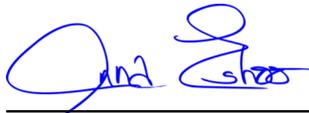
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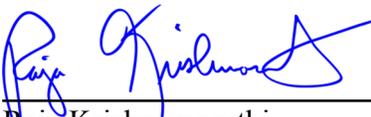
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