

Monday July 17th, 2017
Rep. Rob Bishop, Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
123 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1511 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the membership of the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) we wish to thank-you from taking time to hear H.R. 424 authored by Rep. Collin Peterson. MFU is a strong supporter of this legislation that requires the Department of the Interior to reissue the final rule published on December 28, 2011, that removed the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes Distinct Population Segment from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and that removed the designation of critical habitat for that wolf in Minnesota and Michigan.

De-listing the gray wolf has been a top issue for our livestock farmers in the northern part of the state, as we have seen continued conflict between wolves and livestock farmers. MFU strongly believes that gray wolf numbers have adequately recovered in Minnesota. MFU also strongly believes that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) is ready and able to administer the gray wolf population through its current management plans. Minnesota has consistently topped the federal delisting goal of 1,250-1,400 with numbers exceeding 2,000 wolves in recent years surveys. Again, MFU appreciates Rep. Peterson carrying this important legislation forward, and appreciates the committees time in hearing this legislation, and MFU urges its passage.

Regards,

Gary Wertish, President



07/18/2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Gray Wolf State Management Act (H.R. 424)

Chairman Bishop & Ranking Member Grijalva,

On behalf of the American Farm Bureau Federation, we would like to thank you for scheduling a hearing to consider the Gray Wolf State Management Act (H.R. 424). This commonsense, bipartisan legislation would reinstate the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) order to remove the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes and Wyoming from the federal Endangered Species List. It would also provide legal clarity for the gray wolf's status on the Endangered Species list.

Farm Bureau has been an active participant in the wolf issue for decades. That participation encompasses legal efforts in the federal district court in Minnesota seeking damages on behalf of Minnesota ranchers resulting from wolf predation; a lawsuit challenging the introduction of wolves into Montana, Wyoming and Idaho; comments on proposed federal regulations; comments delivered in public and congressional hearings; and regular interaction with the FWS on the impact of gray wolf populations on the membership.

The purpose of the ESA is to recover species that are threatened with extinction: the Act clearly lays out the appropriate path to take after a species has recovered. In the case of the gray wolf, affected states have taken a positive, constructive approach in assuring continued recovery of the wolf, a step which supports the species' de-listing.

Farm Bureau supports Federal efforts to de-list the gray wolf. Such an effort is clearly justified in light of the goals of the Endangered Species Act; the best available scientific and commercial data that is available; the goals outlined in various recovery plans; and the aggressive leadership in affected states. Viewed in this context, the current status of the wolf clearly justifies its removal from the list of threatened and endangered species.

We commend you for your leadership on this important issue, and look forward to continuing to work with you and the House Natural Resources Committee in securing enactment of this critically important legislation.

Sincerely,

Dale W. Moore

Dale Moore
Executive Director, Public Policy
American Farm Bureau Federation



July 18, 2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Livestock Industry Support for H.R. 424, the *Gray Wolf State Management Act of 2017*

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) support H.R. 424, *the Gray Wolf State Management Act of 2017*.

PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers operating on federal lands. NCBA is the nation's oldest and largest national trade association for cattlemen and women, representing more than 170,000 cattle producers through direct membership and their state affiliates. PLC and NCBA are producer directed and in partnership with our state affiliates work to preserve the heritage and strength of the industry by providing a stable business environment for our members.

The livestock industry has numerous concerns with the gray wolf being listed as an endangered species. Unlike most species listed under the ESA, wolves pose a serious threat to wildlife, humans, private property – namely, livestock – even in cases where wolf populations are sparse. The result is economic hardship and the possibility of a need to list other species. Secondly, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has already determined the wolf is no longer warranted for listing under the ESA.

H.R. 424, introduced by Representative Collin Peterson calls for the Secretary of the Interior to reinstate two U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decisions that delisted the gray wolf from the endangered species list in the Great Lakes Region and Wyoming, allowing the states to continue to manage the wolf populations, as they have successfully done for several years. Relisting the species undermined the good work that has taken place on the ground, and unnecessarily takes away the states right to manage wildlife populations within their borders. It also takes away the ability for livestock producers to protect their herds, putting their livelihood and economic stability in jeopardy. H.R. 424, is a bipartisan, common sense approach to management of species, which promotes cooperation between the USFWS, state wildlife agencies, and local stakeholders.

PLC and NCBA have been continually involved in ESA related activities. Our associations have submitted comments in partnership with our state affiliate organizations on the Gray and Mexican Wolves, Sage Grouse, Lesser Prairie Chicken, and the Black Footed Ferret to name a few. For the last two years, we have been fully engaged with the Western Governors Association and the ESA Initiative led by Governor Matt Mead of Wyoming. It is crucial for the livestock industry to be engaged to the fullest extent possible, in order to ensure that the nation's livestock producers, who provide food and fiber for the nation and world, are protected from harmful and unwarranted listings under the ESA.

PLC and NCBA applaud the efforts of Representative Peterson and appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. We encourage members of the Committee to support this positive and proactive piece of legislation.

Sincerely,



Dave Eliason
President
Public Lands Council



Craig Uden
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association