

DAVE FREUDENTHAL
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL
CHEYENNE, WY 82002

Office of the Governor

March 2, 2007

The Honorable Roy Cohee
Speaker of the House
Wyoming House of Representatives
State Capitol
Cheyenne, WY 82002

The Honorable John Schiffer
President of the Senate
Wyoming Senate
State Capitol
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Speaker Cohee and President Schiffer:

I have signed House Enrolled Act 123. It is important that I inform you and the Wyoming Legislature of my intentions with regard to wolves.

Over the past several months, the debate in the Legislature and negotiations with the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have focused on a critical issue that we all face in the coming months and years. The critical issue is that a largely unmanaged and overpopulated wolf population threatens our wildlife herds. I commend the Wyoming Legislature for its recognition of this critical problem and for sharpening the debate. I will encourage the federal government to take immediate steps to remedy the problem.

I believe it is also important to remember that in 2003, the Wyoming Legislature passed statutes governing wolves that ten of eleven peer reviewers found to be biologically adequate to sustain our "share" of a recovered wolf population. While HEA123 **may** provide a modification of Wyoming law at some date in the future, the Wyoming statutes passed in 2003, and the management plan adopted pursuant to these statutes, remain in full force and effect. I intend to continue to aggressively pursue this lawsuit supporting existing statutes and the existing plan. At the same time, I will pursue the opportunities to reach a resolution of the issues as outlined in HEA123.

HEA123, in my mind, puts the ball firmly in the federal government's court. If, and only if, the federal government recognizes the need to protect all wildlife – rather than just protecting wolves – I would consider asking the Game and Fish Commission to move the trophy game boundary as authorized by HEA123. Without any movement to protect our precious wildlife herds, HEA123 will likely cease to exist on February 29, 2008, as outlined in the bill.

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If HEA123 ever becomes effective, we will need to revisit the issue of giving the Wyoming Game and Fish Department the necessary bodies and funds to manage wolves. While I firmly believe that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department will be more effective in managing wolves than the FWS, Game and Fish cannot do so with existing resources. It is unfair for the sportsmen of this State to be forced to pay, via their license fees, for the management of a reintroduced species that limits their hunting opportunities. I will continue to seek federal monies for wolf management post-delisting but tend to believe that upon delisting, the FWS will ride off into the sunset having burdened Wyoming with the financial cost of wolf management for years to come. While I abhor this result, I am not so naïve to believe the result will be otherwise.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of our wildlife during their time of critical need. I commend you for creating an extra tool to continue this important fight for our wildlife.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Freudenthal", with a large, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

Dave Freudenthal
Governor

DF:pjb