

October 18, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources

RE: The Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The undersigned agriculture, sportsmen, wildlife and local government organizations urge your strong support for retention in conference of House provisions in the above legislation that would restore the actions of the USFWS delisting the gray wolf in the Western Great Lakes and Wyoming. The text of these provisions is as follows:

Subtitle S—Gray Wolves

SEC. 2201. REISSUANCE OF FINAL RULE REGARDING GRAY WOLVES IN THE WESTERN GREAT LAKES.

Before the end of the 60-day period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall reissue the final rule published on December 28, 2011 (76 Fed. Reg. 81666), without regard to any other provision of statute or regulation that applies to issuance of such rule. Such reissuance shall not be subject to judicial review.

SEC. 2202. REISSUANCE OF FINAL RULE REGARDING GRAY WOLVES IN WYOMING.

Before the end of the 60-day period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior shall reissue the final rule published on September 10, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 55530), without regard to any other provision of statute or regulation that applies to issuance of such rule. Such reissuance shall not be subject to judicial review.

Adoption of these provisions will restore best available science as the basis for wolf management. As stated in briefs filed in litigation before the DC Circuit Court appealing a District Court decision that re-listed the grey wolf in Wyoming, “FWS exhaustively analyzed and thoroughly explained its conclusion that the gray wolf in Wyoming is fully recovered and should be removed from the list of endangered species. In analyzing, as the Act requires, whether the “inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms” threatens or endangers the wolf population, FWS examined and based its conclusion on the three principal components of Wyoming’s regulatory framework: its statutes, its regulations, and its management plan.”

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Our organizations support the commitment to maintaining a viable gray wolf population in Wyoming managed under the USFWS approved Wyoming Wolf management Plan. This plan recognizes the need to protect domestic livestock from predation and to maintain wildlife populations that are important to sportsmen. Both ranching and wildlife are critical to our economy and to our way of life.

As noted in the above cited litigation, "*The Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population has far exceeded its numeric recovery goals.*" It is time for the U.S Congress to step up to protect the interests of ranchers, sportsmen and the citizens of our state while defending the integrity of the delisting process established by the Endangered Species Act.

Both the House and Senate versions of this legislation contain other important provisions designed to assure access to federal land and enhance hunting and fishing opportunities. Continuation of economically viable ranching operations and maintenance of strong wildlife populations are both critical in giving true meaning to those bill provisions. Delisting of the gray wolf in Wyoming and in the Western Great lakes is an essential component in reaching these management goals.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments and we look forward to the delisting of wolves in Wyoming and the Western Great Lakes.

Sincerely,

Cody Country Outfitters & Guides Association

Dubois Outfitters & Guides Association

Jackson Hole Outfitters & Guides Association

Muley Fanatic Foundation

Park County Commission

Sublette County Commission

Sublette County Outfitters & Guides Association

Wyoming Hunter Defense Fund

Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts

Wyoming County Commissioners Association

Wyoming Hunter Defense Fund

Wyoming Outfitters & Guides Association

Wyoming Stock Growers Association

Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation

Wyoming Wool Growers Association