

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:  
APPROPRIATIONS

BUDGET

HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

HOMELAND SECURITY  
AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

December 7, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room: S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room: S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room: H-232  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room: H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

I write to express concern that Congress is on track to adjourn for the year without acting to delist the Western Great Lakes population of the gray wolf from the Endangered Species List and pass management of the wolf back to the State of Wisconsin.

The House-passed version of S. 2012, the Energy Policy Modernization Act, included a provision to delist the gray wolf. I support this provision and I would reiterate my request to maintain this provision in the final version of the bill. Members of the House and Senate have been negotiating the Energy Bill with the goal of reaching a compromise that would pass and become law before Congress adjourned for the holidays. However, the House is on track to adjourn this week without finishing this legislation, leaving the business of delisting the Western Great Lakes population of the gray wolf unfinished. I would urge congressional leadership to finish this important work and schedule time needed to pass the bill prior to adjourning.

There is strong support in Wisconsin for delisting the wolf before the end of the year. Governor Walker recently called for legislation to delist the gray wolf before Congress adjourns and members of the Wisconsin State Legislature have also expressed this view. Leaving this issue on the table into the late winter and spring will only delay relief needed for farmers to protect their livestock and landowners to be able to respond to conflicts with wolves if needed.

The Endangered Species Act plays a critical role in saving species from the brink of extinction, and when it does, we must acknowledge we have succeeded in restoring wildlife populations by delisting them. In 2011, biologists at the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded that the gray wolf population in the Great Lakes states had successfully recovered in Wisconsin. I applauded this decision and urged prompt delisting from the Endangered Species List and a return to state management, which was finalized with the full delisting of the wolf in December 2011.

According to both federal and state wildlife biologists, this goal has been achieved. Wisconsin wolf populations were estimated at 815-880 animals in 2012, the year following delisting. This is far above the population of 100 that the 1992 Recovery Plan for the Eastern Timber Wolf set as a minimum number of animals necessary to sustain a recovered population. Since the wolf was relisted as endangered following a court decision in late 2014, the wolf population has grown substantially in Wisconsin, and conflicts have increased. The wolf has recovered, and we must manage it as such, both for the safety and economic well-being of Wisconsinites and the balance of our ecosystems.

Congress needs to act before adjourning for the year to delist the Western Great Lakes population of the gray wolf from the Endangered Species List and pass management back to the state. Thank you in advance for your assistance in responding to the urgency of this situation.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

cc: Lisa Murkowski, Chairman, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources;  
Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources;  
Fred Upton, Chairman, House Committee on Energy and Commerce;  
Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce;  
Rob Bishop, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee;  
Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee.