

VIA HAND DELIVERY

January 13, 2021

Senator Rob Stafsholt, Chair and Members
Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Small Business and Rural Issues

Representative Treig Pronschinske, Chair and Members
Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage

RE: Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation Informational Testimony on Annual Wolf Harvesting Season and Wisconsin Wolf Management Issues

Dear Chairman Stafsholt, Chairman Pronschinske and Committee Members:

On behalf of the members of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation (WFBF), I write to express our support for a wolf harvest season as soon as possible in 2021; to request that farmers be included on the forthcoming 2021 DNR Wolf Management Advisory Committee; and to ask that the DNR immediately advise farmers about current wolf management protocols and procedures.

Wolf Harvest Season. As you know the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has removed the gray wolf from the federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and, as such, has returned wolf management to the State. This allows Wisconsin's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to implement the state's wolf plan. The state assumed management of the species in 2012, with a hunting season the following fall resulting in the harvesting of 117 animals. In 2013, hunters harvested 257 and 154 animals the following season in 2014. Under the state wolf plan, Wisconsin has a population goal of 350 animals, yet information provided by the DNR's new population estimates put the wolf population over 1300 animals.

In Wisconsin, 2011 Wisconsin Act 169 established a wolf hunting season once federal and state protections are removed. Under the Act, the season is to begin in November each year and conclude by February 28th. The Act allows the DNR to close the different harvest zones once harvest goals have been met. We respectfully request that DNR prepare immediately for a wolf hunt in Wisconsin and try to establish a hunting season prior to the official close of the season on February 28, 2021.

Farmer Members on Wolf Management Advisory Committee. We understand that the DNR will be establishing a new Wolf Management Advisory Committee in the coming days or weeks, which is anticipated to provide input into revisions to the state wolf management plan in 2021. We believe that including farmers on that Committee is critically important in order to ensure that management issues related to livestock are discussed and addressed. In December, we requested that a representative from the WFBF serve on the DNR's Wolf Management Advisory Committee and we reiterate that request today.

Wolf Management Advisory for Farmers. Finally, as you know, many of our livestock producer members are currently being impacted by wolf depredations in Wisconsin. We have requested that DNR immediately issue an advisory to Wisconsin livestock farmers that provides them with the current, updated protocols and procedures for wolf management on their farms following any documented or suspected wolf depredations of livestock now that the wolf has been removed from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife in the State of Wisconsin. Specifically, we ask for written guidance describing the management options that farmers currently have, an explanation of how the protocols have changed post-delisting, and a description of the notification or management recommendations for problem wolves on farms.

Respectfully,



Kevin Krentz
President, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation