

United States Senate

March 27, 2015

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Daniel Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell and Director Ashe,

I write to express support for a rulemaking petition filed by The Humane Society of the United States and other animal protection and environmental groups urging the Service to consider modifying the listing status of the gray wolf in the lower 48 states from endangered to threatened status under the Endangered Species Act.

I appreciate the Service's efforts to make listing decisions based on the best available science and to balance the interests of a broad and diverse range of stakeholders and members of the public. I believe this proposal is a constructive compromise that would retain federal oversight of wolf conservation efforts but also allow flexibility for managing problem wolves and helping ranchers and farmers deal with livestock depredation.

The issue of wolf management has been controversial, especially in my state of Michigan and in other Great Lakes states with wolf populations. Wolf recovery has been a success story thanks to nearly four decades of federal protection and targeted investments in restoring wolves in key areas.

The citizens of Michigan are very interested in wolf management issues. As illustrated by the results of two wolf hunting measures on the ballot in November, the public does not want to turn back the clock on wolf recovery. At the same time, farmers such as those in Michigan's Upper Peninsula are experiencing real conflicts with wolves and need solutions to prevent livestock losses that harm their ability to earn a living.

It is my understanding that listing wolves under a threatened status instead of endangered would provide federal oversight while giving federal and state wildlife managers the flexibility to address the lethal control of problem wolves in a targeted way. This common sense change would balance these concerns while ensuring the survival and recovery of the species.

This would provide the Service with vastly expanded flexibility to authorize taking of wolves, while preserving limited federal conservation oversight to ensure state actions are Service approved and carefully managed. The Service has the tools currently to help farmers in our state to manage wolf depredation of livestock, including with lethal control.

I encourage you to reopen the 2013 proposed rule to delist wolves and to use the ongoing administrative rulemaking process to propose the downlisting of wolves to threatened status. After hearing from members of the public and reviewing the science on this issue, I hope you will find that it's a reasonable pathway forward to find a balanced solution to a controversial issue. Thank you for your consideration and for the administration's work on this complex issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gary Peters", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator