

May 24, 2021

The Honorable Bill Ingebrigtsen, Chair
Envir. & Natural Resources Finance Cmte
Minnesota Senate
3207 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Rick Hansen, Chair
Envir. & Natural Resources Finance/Policy Cmte
Minnesota House of Representatives
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Carrie Ruud, Chair
Envir. & Natural Resources Policy/Legacy Finance Cmte
Minnesota Senate
3233 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Re: Provision on Open Season on Wolves; SF 959 (Senate Language, Art. 2, Sec. 68; 2021 Session)

Dear Chairs Ingebrigtsen, Hansen, and Ruud and Members of the Conference Committee on SF 959:

On behalf of Howling For Wolves, its active supporters across the state, and the [vast majority of Minnesota residents](#), I write to urge the committee to protect wolves for future generations by rejecting the mandatory wolf hunt in the final Environment Conference Committee Report during the upcoming special session.

Unlike deer and other species hunted in Minnesota, wolves live in packs and depend on each other for survival. Wolves are apex predators and as such they have the social and biological structure to naturally control their own pack sizes and numbers. To be clear: the estimated wolf population in Minnesota is not increasing and may be stable. However, their pack sizes are their smallest ever at [just over 3 wolves per pack](#).

Regarding the mandatory open season on wolves in the Senate side of SF959 (Art. 2, Sec. 68; 2021 Session)—whether you call it sport or management, the focus of Minnesota’s wolf policies wrongly remains on killing and justifying killing wolves by estimating whether the wolf population can withstand the numbers of deaths. Given the very small average wolf pack sizes—and this is the smallest ever measured—it is evident that we continue to create disruption of pack structure and unpredictable effects with wolf killing policies. A mandatory wolf hunting bill will move our state’s wolf population further toward species’ endangerment. This proposal ignores scientific evidence that trophy hunts are counterproductive for wolf conservation and livestock producers alike.

Moreover, it is now proven that *legal* wolf killing [worsens poaching and other illegal wolf killing](#), often called “shoot, shovel, and shut up.” Even more worrisome is that there is no way to control wolf killing. The quotas determined for wolf hunts are not the reality of the actual wolf deaths. The state cannot stop people from killing wolves. Thus, the state must be the example and stop legal wolf killing to get the message to the minority of individuals who kill wolves.

Keep in mind, even if there is no wolf hunting season, with federal protections now lifted, Minnesota's wolves are already killed year-round—both legally and illegally. Under the [current wolf management plan](#), wolves can be baited for one mile out and killed indefinitely for complaints as minimal as evidence of paw tracks. Killing one wolf causes unpredictable problems including more wolf deaths and increased wolf-livestock conflicts. We need nonlethal wolf plans and support for conflict prevention methods for farmers to let wolves live.

Minnesota's gray wolves were the only original population that never went extinct in the entire lower 48 states, and their survival is vital to our forests and waters because the presence of wolves supports increased and more diverse vegetation. They naturally slow the spread of chronic wasting disease and the presence of our gray wolf is responsible for the large and magnificent white tail deer population.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Maureen Hackett, M.D.
Founder & President
Howling For Wolves
P.O. Box 4099
Hopkins, MN 55343

CC: Senators Justin D. Eichorn, David J. Tomassoni, and Torrey N. Westrom (Senate Conferees)
Representatives Ami Wazlawik, Kelly Morrison, Peter Fischer, Josh Heintzeman (House Conferees)
Office of Governor Tim Walz & Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan