

Wolf bill moving forward in MN Legislature

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (March 4, 2013) – Today, legislation was introduced into the Minnesota State House of Representatives to reinstate a five-year moratorium on recreational wolf hunting and trapping. Chief house author, Rep. Jason Isaacson (DFL - Shoreview) introduced H.F. 1163, the companion bill for S.F. 666 introduced by Sen. Chris Eaton. The bill calls for a five-year wait before another wolf hunting season can be proposed, and only for population management purposes after other options are explored. H.F. 1163 is also signed by metro lawmakers Rep. Susan Allen (DFL – Minneapolis), Rep. Sandra Masin (DFL - Eagan), and Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL – Minneapolis).

“This is an important issue that deserves to be heard. The Republican controlled legislature broke an agreement with the public by removing the five-year waiting period on wolf hunting and trapping following delisting. They did it behind locked doors and without public input; that’s why we’re here now, Minnesotans deserve to be heard”, noted Rep. Jason Isaacson.

In the Senate, a committee hearing of the bill is scheduled for 12pm Tuesday, March 12 before the Environment and Energy committee. “We thank Senator Marty for hearing this bill and we hope that Representative Dill will demonstrate the same commitment to this important ecological issue by hearing this bill in his committee”, commented Dr. Maureen Hackett, founder of Howling For Wolves. She continued, “A five-year wait is necessary to monitor the health of the wolf population as it transitions from Federal to State management authority and we adjust to lightened legal restrictions and penalties for wolf killing. It also allows an opportunity for public attitudes to be assessed, which is an important part of ongoing wolf management that hasn’t been done for over 10 years”.

Recently, Governor Mark Dayton was quoted in an article published by the Star Tribune Editorial Board on March 1st as saying, “In the last legislative session, I did not have a single meeting, single phone call or single request that I know of for a meeting or conversation about the wolf season.” Howling For Wolves collected over 10,000 Minnesota signatures in 2012 to stop the wolf hunt, held rallies and vigils at the Governor’s residence and made several attempts to have a dialogue with the Governor. “We know thousands of Minnesotans have voiced their concerns to Governor Dayton’s office through phone calls, emails, and letters. We are happy to know the Governor is now willing to listen to the public,” said Dr. Hackett.

While the DNR rushed to a hunt, everything they tell the public is an attempt to minimize the negative aspects of a wolf hunt. The DNR’s actions puts at risk the benefits that having a wild wolf population provides to Minnesota. There was never a population control need demonstrated. We need to come together to determine the actual value of the wolf to our state. The tourism potential that the state can garner from the wolf is real and lucrative. We can come together as a state to increase tourism by stopping the recreational hunt and work to support our farmers in wolf territory.

The wolf is not just another herd or game species. That thinking ignores the special nature of this top predator and essential factors it provides to habitat for birds, fish, and vegetation. The wolf is still a misunderstood and mistreated animal. There are no studies that show a regulated hunt decreases the persecutory actions directed at the wolf. We know there is a large dialogue amongst hunters that wolves are killed and not reported. A wolf hunt affects the structure of packs in a manner that is unpredictable and can make livestock problems worse.

“The DNR’s rush to hunt wolves appears as more political favors being traded on the backs of wolves”, said Dr. Hackett.

Howling for Wolves was created to be a voice for wild wolves and those who are concerned with their survival. We aim to educate the public about our wolf population and the advocacy that is necessary to keep wild wolves in a self-sustaining existence. For more information and resources: www.howlingforwolves.org

Maureen Hackett, M.D., the founder of Howling for Wolves, is a physician, a triple board certified forensic psychiatrist, and a former United State Air Force officer. In 2003, Hackett was instrumental in the passage of Minnesota law providing for tobacco-free state hospital grounds.

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