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To: Interested Parties

CC: Howling For Wolves

From: Joshua Ulibarri, Bob Meadow, and Dom Bartkus

Re: Minnesota voters value and want to protect the gray wolf

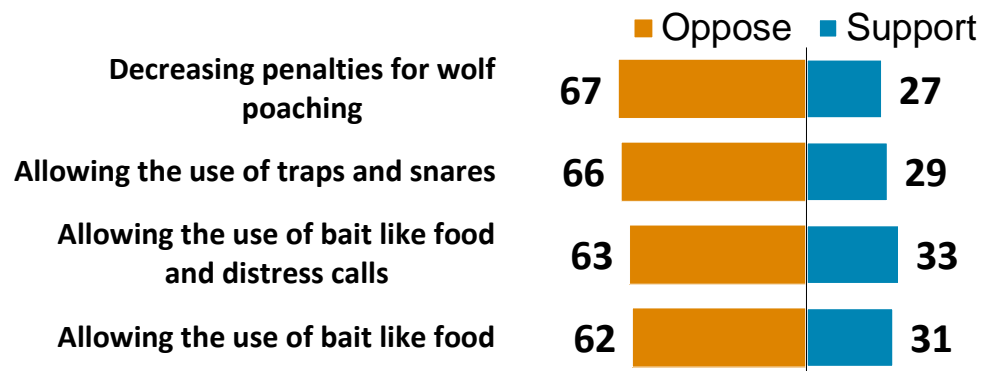
Date: March 11, 2013

A recent Lake Research Partners surveyⁱ finds that a **majority of registered voters in Minnesota want to reinstate a five-year waiting period before a wolf hunt is allowed**. The vast majority of voters consider the gray wolf an asset and they oppose a number of hunting and trapping practices allowed to hunt wolves. Three in four voters also agree it was wrong to allow a recreational wolf hunting and trapping season without first conducting a comprehensive wolf population study.

The major findings are as follows:

- **A majority of voters oppose the use of traps, snares, and bait to hunt and trap wolves in Minnesota and they oppose weakening poaching laws.** Sixty-six percent (66%) of voters oppose allowing the use of traps and snares to hunt Minnesota's gray wolves (29% support)ⁱⁱ, 62% oppose the use of bait, like food, (31% support)ⁱⁱⁱ and 63% oppose the use of bait, like food and distress calls (33% support).^{iv} In 2012, the state legislature weakened poaching penalties and the poll shows that more than two thirds (67%) of registered voters oppose decreased penalties for wolf poaching, with 57% saying they oppose weaker penalties *strongly* (27% support decreased penalties).^v In fact, a majority of hunting households in Minnesota also oppose weaker poaching penalties, as well as each of the hunting and trapping practices currently used.

Wolf Hunting in Minnesota



- **The vast majority of voters consider the gray wolf an asset that needs to be protected for future generations.** Seventy-nine percent of registered voters agree that the wolf is an asset to Minnesota and that the animal should be protected for future generations.^{vi} In fact, 61% agree with the statement strongly and just 17% do not think the gray wolf is an asset to Minnesota.
- At the same time, **two thirds (66%) of respondents also believe that there is no need for a wolf hunt if Minnesotans already have the legal authority to kill wolves if the animal threatens people, livestock, and property.**^{vii} Just 25% disagree, saying that a wolf hunt is still necessary. These numbers strongly suggest that most Minnesotans view a recreational, for-trophy wolf hunt to be unnecessary.
- **A majority of Minnesota voters favor reinstating a five-year waiting period before resuming a wolf hunt.** Fifty-three percent of Minnesotans favor the state legislature reinstating a five-year waiting period and suspend wolf hunting and trapping in Minnesota for the next five years, with 37% of voters supporting this strongly.^{viii} The total opposition to the waiting period is just 40% of voters. Support for the waiting period is reinforced by their belief that it was wrong to allow a recreational wolf hunt without first conducting a comprehensive wolf population.
- **Three in four (75%) voters think it was wrong to allow a wolf hunt prior to conducting a wolf population survey.**^{ix} Just 19% of Minnesota voters believe that it was not wrong to proceed with a wolf hunt without a current wolf population survey. An overwhelming majority (76%) of hunting households in Minnesota agree that allowing a wolf hunt without conducting a population survey first was the wrong approach. Three in four (75%) also believe that the state of **Minnesota should take its time to determine the best way to manage the gray wolf population responsibly** before allowing a hunt (22% disagree with the statement).^x

In summary, Minnesotans value the gray wolf and want to protect it for future generations. Voters also agree it was wrong to allow a wolf hunt before conducting a comprehensive population study and they oppose cruel means of hunting that are currently allowed by law. Consequently, the majority of Minnesota voters want the five-year waiting period reinstated.

ⁱ **Methodology:** Lake Research Partners designed and administered this telephone survey using professional interviewers February 28 – March 4, 2013. The survey was conducted with 600 registered voters in Minnesota and has a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points. Random Digit Dial (RDD) method was used for the survey and respondents were asked if they were registered to vote in Minnesota. Twenty-five percent of interviews were conducted with cell phones and 48% of respondents said a cell phone is their primary or exclusive telephone. Thirty-eight percent of respondents identified living in a hunting household. To conform to the registered voter profile in the state, the data were weighted slightly by gender, region, and age.

ⁱⁱ **Question wording:** Do you support or oppose allowing the use of traps and snares to hunt wolves?

ⁱⁱⁱ **Question wording:** Do you support or oppose allowing the use bait, like food and distress calls, to hunt and trap wolves?

^{iv} **Question wording:** Do you support or oppose allowing the use bait like food to hunt and trap wolves?

^v **Question wording:** Here are some things that have taken place since wolf hunting and trapping was legalized in Minnesota. For each, please tell me if you support or oppose it. Do you support or oppose decreasing penalties for wolf poaching?

^{vi} **Question wording:** Now I would like to read you some statements. For each, please tell me if you agree or disagree with that particular statement. If you do not know how you feel about a particular statement, just say so, and we will move on. The wolf is an asset to Minnesota and should be protected for future generations. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

^{vii} **Question wording:** A wolf hunt is unnecessary if Minnesotans already have the legal authority to kill wolves to protect their families, livestock, and property. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

^{viii} **Question wording:** Previously under Minnesota state law, there was to be a five-year waiting period between the time the wolf was removed from federal protection and when the actual hunt could begin. The intent of the five-year period was to allow Minnesota to adjust to state control of wolf management, assess the health of the wolf population, and to determine what wolf population management measures, if any, were necessary. In 2011, the state legislature amended the law and REMOVED the waiting period, allowing an immediate wolf hunt once the wolf was removed from the list of endangered species. Now there is a bill in the legislature to reinstate the five-year waiting period. Would you favor or oppose the Minnesota state legislature enacting a law that would reinstate a five year waiting period and suspend wolf hunting and trapping in Minnesota for the next five years?

^{ix} **Question wording:** It is wrong to allow a recreational wolf hunt without conducting a comprehensive wolf population survey first. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

^x **Question wording:** It is important to take our time and carefully determine how best to manage Minnesota wolves responsibly before allowing a wolf hunt. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?