

August 29, 2017

Amy Leuders
Regional Director, Southwest Region
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

As elected representatives and senators for the state of New Mexico, we are deeply concerned with the recovery of endangered species in our state. We write you today with specific concerns regarding the draft recovery plan for the Mexican Gray Wolf, which was once a conservation success story, but will be fatally shortchanged by a flawed, politically-driven recovery plan.

The draft "Mexican wolf recovery plan, first revision" released by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on June 30, 2017 (Federal Register Vol. 82, No. 125 29918-29920) is critically flawed and does not represent the best scientific and commercial data available.

To address these flaws, we request that the USFWS change the draft in the following ways:

- Specify a benchmark of genetic diversity in addition to a target number of individuals released from captivity for downlisting and delisting criteria;
- Specify the population target for downlisting and delisting criteria be 750 wolves in three interconnected U.S. locations;
- Allow wolves to disperse outside of the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Area (MWEPA) northward into northern New Mexico;
- Explicitly address the effects of climate change on Mexican wolf recovery, especially as it relates to suitable habitat;
- Explicitly address connectivity between populations of Mexican gray wolves, especially as it pertains to any barriers like the proposed border wall between Mexico and the United States;
- Recommend compensated voluntary permit retirement of public lands grazing allotments to reduce livestock conflicts and improve natural prey base; and
- Provide greater guidance to land management agencies regarding management strategies that increase habitat security for wolves and further enhance recovery objectives.
- Remove any language that attempts to give the states sole authority over determining the timing, location and circumstance of the release of wolves into the wild within their respective state from the captive population;

Thank you very much for considering my comments on the draft Mexican gray wolf recovery plan, first revision. I look forward to significant changes in the final plan.

Sincerely,

Rep. Gail Chasey
State Representative, HD 18 – Albuquerque

Rep. Damon Ely
State Representative, HD 23 – Corrales

Rep. Joanne Ferrary
State Representative, HD 37 - Las Cruces

Rep. Doreen Gallegos
State Representative, HD 52 – Las Cruces

Rep. Georgene Louis
State Representative, HD 26 – Albuquerque

Rep. Javier Martínez
State Representative, HD 11 – Albuquerque

Rep. Rodolpho Martinez
State Representative, HD 39 – Bayard

Rep. Bill McCamley
State Representative, HD 33 – Mesilla Park

Rep. Matthew McQueen
State Representative, HD 50 – Santa Fe

Sen. Cisco McSorley
State Senator, SD 16 – Albuquerque

Sen. Bill O’Neill
State Senator, SD 13 – Albuquerque

Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino
State Senator, SD 12 – Albuquerque

Sen. Michael Padilla
State Senator, SD 14 – Bernalillo

Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
State Senator, SD 24 – Santa Fe

Rep. Angelica Rubio
State Representative, HD 35 – Las Cruces

Rep. Nathan Small
State Representative, HD 36 – Las Cruces

Sen. William Soules
State Senator, SD 37 – Las Cruces

Sen. Elizabeth Stefanics
State Senator, SD 39 – Cerillos

Sen. Jeff Steinborn
State Senator, SD 36 – Las Cruces

Sen. Mimi Stewart
State Senator, SD 17 – Albuquerque

Rep. Linda Trujillo
Representative, HD 48 – Santa Fe

Sen. Peter Wirth
State Senator, SD 25 – Santa Fe