

Dear President Obama, Secretary Salazar, State and Federal Officials:

I am shocked that the Obama administration has activated a Bush-era rule to remove gray wolves from the Endangered Species list. The delisting of Greater Yellowstone wolves basically sanctions their slaughter.

Montana opens fire on 9/15/09 with a 75-wolf limit. Idaho's race to kill up to 25% of its wolves (during this season alone) began on 9/1/09. Idaho's Department of Fish and Game hopes to sell 70,000 wolf-hunt permits in 2009. That's too many trophy hunters to unleash on a wolf population that has not fully rebounded.

Idaho's estimated 1,000 wolves cannot withstand an annual hunt. Yet this year officials set a 330-wolf quota — with Idaho hunters allowed to take 220 wolves. The state's Nez Perce tribe may kill another 35 wolves.

Where is the intelligent strategy to sustain the very wolves that Americans salvaged from near extinction? Instead, we are asked to standby as Idaho and Montana aim for possibly the largest wolf bloodbath since the 1930s.

It is not too late to halt the hunt and renew Endangered Species Act safeguards for gray wolves in the Northern Rockies. I urge you to take meaningful action to reinstate protections now.

At the very least, suspend this irresponsible wolf "management" plan until it undergoes the type scientific scrutiny the Obama administration advocates. Secretary Salazar's original verdict to delist wolves didn't assess biological repercussions. It failed to consider Idaho's policy for the unsustainable killing of hundreds of wolves.

During the Bush administration, conservation groups convinced a federal court to reject the same delisting rule. This time, 13 groups filed a similar lawsuit to restore endangered species status for wolves.

Wolves are key to thriving ecosystems. But state plans seem more focused on eradication than ecologically balanced wildlife populations. The federal government needs to defend the wolves that U.S. citizens invested millions in tax dollars to save.

Thank you,

President Barack Obama

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