

Monday, October 21, 2010

Dear Montana Congressional Delegation,

We write to express our support for H.R. 6028 sponsored by Congressman Denny Rehberg and Congressman Chet Edwards, to remove wolves from listing under the Endangered Species Act and return wolves to state management. We also support the Senate version of H.R. 6028, S. 3919, sponsored by Senators Hatch, Crapo, Risch, Barrasso and Enzi. We applaud the efforts which have resulted in obtaining broad based bi-partisan support for this important legislation.

The experimental reintroduction and explosive growth of wolf populations across the Northern Rockies and Upper Midwest, and in particular in our own state of Montana has become of great concern to the Montana livestock industry, wildlife organizations and sportsmen's groups. Wolf populations reached delisting criteria as early as the 1970's in Minnesota, 1993-1994 in Wisconsin and Michigan and 2002 in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. The decisions by both the Bush and Obama administrations to delist wolves have been repeatedly challenged in an ongoing effort to stop any wolf management in the lower 48 states and to undermine state management of its wildlife and grazing resources.

Notwithstanding the best efforts by the state of Montana and the explosion of wolf populations far beyond established delisting numbers, legal and political maneuvering has prevented the promised return of wolves to state wildlife management. Montana is not alone. The states of Idaho, Wyoming, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan are experiencing similar challenges. It has become clear that saturated wolf populations are now doing significant damage not only to wildlife populations in some of our most important wilderness areas, but also threatening the economic health of livestock producers across much of the Northern Rockies. We feel the future of the livestock industry and wildlife populations in Montana depend on the passage of these two important bills.

We join with our counterpart organizations in the states of Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Arizona and New Mexico in support of these bills. We strongly oppose any efforts that would: (1) delist only portions of the United States wolf population; (2) leave the door open to ongoing legal challenges by anti-grazing and anti-hunting groups that could further delay needed wolf control activities; or (3) that would undermine the authority of state fish and game agencies to manage wolves or other wildlife populations.

Given the importance of this legislation to the state of Montana, we urge each of you to dedicate whatever resources are needed to enact this legislation. Additionally, we ask you to apply the political capital with members of Congress across the country to obtain the remaining votes needed for passage of S. 3919 and H.R. 6028. While we

understand that Congress has many important matters to address, no legislation is more important to the future of wildlife and livestock in Montana.

Thank you for your leadership on this important management issue.

Sincerely,



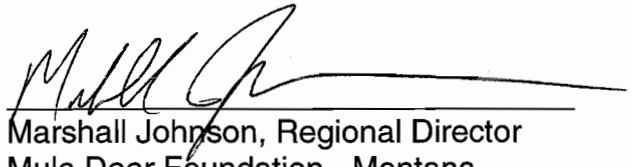
Bob Hanson, President  
Montana Farm Bureau Federation



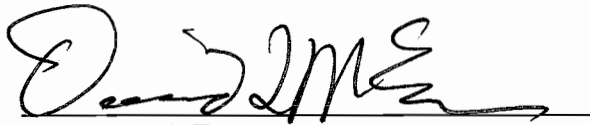
David Allen, CEO  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation



Alan Merrill, President  
Montana Farmers Union



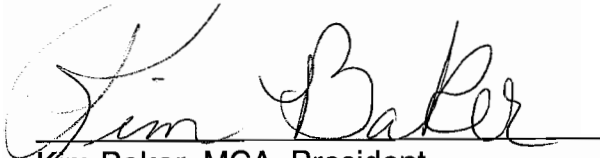
Marshall Johnson, Regional Director  
Mule Deer Foundation - Montana



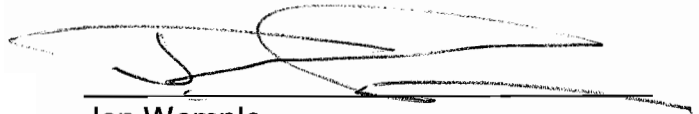
David L. McEwen  
Montana Woolgrowers Association



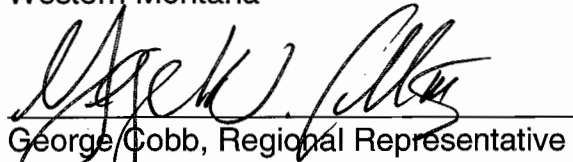
Bill Merrill, President  
Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife-Montana



Kim Baker, MCA, President  
Montana Cattleman Association



Jon Wemple  
Safari Club International  
Western Montana



George Cobb, Regional Representative  
Safari Club International-Montana