

April 20th, 2023

Dear Members of the Minnesota Senate,

We, the undersigned organizations, respectfully ask you to oppose any amendments to any Omnibus Environment and Climate Bill that would prohibit a future wolf season in Minnesota. We understand a last-minute amendment was added to the House version of this omnibus bill on April 17th, without consideration, testimony, or other public input at a legislative committee hearing. We believe a major policy change such as the status of a wolf hunting season in Minnesota should be addressed within traditional policy legislation, not added as an amendment to a major spending or policy bill without public or DNR input.

We also urge you to support active and responsible wolf management within the State of Minnesota. Wolf population estimates clearly show that wolves are well above target population numbers. The USFWS set a recovery goal of 1,251-1,400 wolves in Minnesota, a number that was expanded by the DNR to 1,600 wolves. Wolves have surpassed both goals with a current population of around 2,700. With an increasing human population and resulting habitat fragmentation, this is not an ecologically sustainable population in the state. Therefore, we believe active wolf management within the state is the responsible thing to do.

Importantly, the wolf was reinstated to full protection as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in February 2022 by federal court order. There is not a current season and cannot be one until wolves are removed from ESA protections. In the meantime, wolves are devastating Minnesota's wild deer herd and the rich tradition of deer hunting in the state of Minnesota. The same can be said of moose populations in several areas with the potential for similar problems with our elk herd.

A responsible wolf management plan may include scientifically controlled seasons in the future, should the wolf be delisted at the federal level. The wolf population is concerning to Minnesota hunters, trappers, conservationists, farmers, breeders, and others. We recognize this is a culturally sensitive and challenging issue with strong opinions put forward by all stakeholders. The issue deserves proper legislative hearings and consideration through the official legislative process, and we ask that any efforts to have this "prohibition" become law without due process be opposed.

Minnesota Deer Hunters Association

The Sportsmen's Alliance

Minnesota Forest Zone Trappers Association

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Safari Club International

Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association

Ruffed Grouse Society

Minnesota Elk Breeder's Association

Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Minnesota Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

MN State Chapter National Deer Association