

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 28, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We are writing to urge the Department of the Interior to issue an emergency listing to restore temporary federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections to the gray wolf in the western United States.

On September 15, in response to two petitions to list the gray wolf in the western United States, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (the Service) announced a substantial 90-day finding, initiating a status review of the gray wolf in the western United States. We applaud this announcement and believe it is the right decision. However, we are deeply concerned that this decision, which initiates a comprehensive review, followed by a 12-month finding on whether listing is warranted or not, and only then potentially begins the formal relisting process, does nothing to protect gray wolves in the interim at a time when their survival is threatened by harmful policies that have already been enacted in several states.

Many of us wrote to your predecessor, Secretary Bernhardt, to urge against wolf delisting in July 2019. In that letter, we argued that returning wolves wholly to state management could stall or even reverse the progress that had been made toward their recovery. Unfortunately, our concerns were justified. After federal protections were formally removed by the Trump administration in early 2021, several states immediately moved to establish harmful wolf management policies. In the Northern Rockies region, where wolves were congressionally delisted in 2011, Idaho passed a new statewide law allowing up to 90 percent of the state's existing wolf population to be killed. In Montana, the state government has sanctioned killing up to 85 percent of its wolf population beginning in fall 2021. These laws are already having devastating impacts on wolves and on federally-protected ecosystems – three Yellowstone National Park wolves were killed in just the first week of Montana's hunting season. Further, both Montana and Idaho have authorized the use of inhumane practices like chokehold snares with the potential to kill entire packs.

If continued unabated for this hunting season, these extreme wolf eradication policies will result in the death of hundreds of gray wolves and will further harm federally protected ecosystems like Yellowstone. The Department of the Interior can prevent these senseless killings, and we urge

you to immediately establish emergency interim protections while the Service completes its status review.

As you know, wolves are an integral component of North American ecosystems. More than 600 scientists [have written](#) to request emergency relisting of the Northern Rockies wolf population, precisely because wolves' role in maintaining healthy ecosystems is being jeopardized by the policies now being implemented by Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. As the scientists note, "Without the presence of key species in numbers, we are merely conserving scenery and not functioning ecosystems."

Furthermore, wolves hold spiritual and cultural significance to many Native American tribes throughout the United States. The [wolf treaty](#), signed by more than 120 tribes and tribal organizations, illustrates how important wolves are in tribal culture. Unfortunately, the Trump administration did not engage in any meaningful tribal consultation ahead of the delisting decision, despite the fact that tribal consultation is critical to the federal government's trust responsibility and is necessary in a true government-to-government relationship. To this end, leaders representing hundreds of Tribal Nations, including every Tribe in Canada, wrote to you on three occasions last month urging an emergency listing decision and requesting consultation on future relisting and delisting measures, as required by law.

Given the above, we urge you to immediately issue an emergency listing to establish temporary federal protections for gray wolves. An emergency listing, which extends for 240 days, will prevent more wolves from being killed before the Service makes a determination about whether relisting is warranted. Furthermore, as part of its status review, we respectfully request that the Service both engage in meaningful tribal consultation and consider the impacts of state-level policies like those in Idaho and Montana as they reevaluate the gray wolf's status.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to working with you to ensure that wolves are adequately protected in the United States.

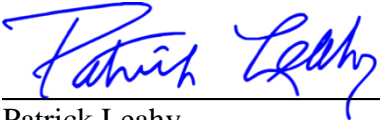
Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



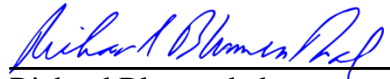
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator




Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



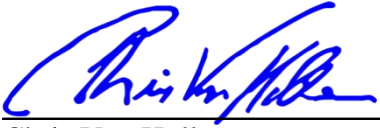
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United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
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Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



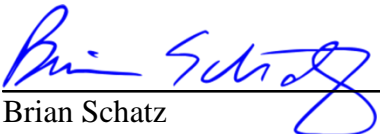
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United States Senator



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