



Congresswoman Candice S. Miller Michigan's 10th Congressional District

House Homeland Security Committee
Chairman – Subcommittee on Border & Maritime Security
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

For Immediate Release

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Congresswoman Candice Miller introduces the State Wildlife Management Act (H.R. 1819)

Summary:

The Endangered Species Act's protection of the gray wolf has been a huge success in states with suitable wolf habitat, to the extent that US Fish and Wildlife Service has repeatedly attempted to delist the gray wolf in these states. Unfortunately, the open ended nature of ESA litigation allows these delisting decisions to be repeatedly tied up in court resulting in the gray wolf unnecessarily remaining protected by the ESA.

As a result of delays in delisting, states are unable to manage wolves and their population has exploded. Unmanaged wolves are decimating other big game populations such as deer, sheep, moose, and elk. Ranchers and livestock producers have to deal repeated livestock depredations. While confirmed depredations are compensated by federal funding, state DNR and other resources, this costs states hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. The stress on DNR budgets resulting from compensation to ranchers is compounded by the fact that states can sell fewer permits for hunting of depressed game populations, which results in the loss of millions of dollars in economic activity from hunters and sportsmen through travel and lodging costs, as well equipment and other costs. Additionally, the majority of livestock depredations cannot be proven due to difficult to satisfy evidentiary standards. This raises serious concerns about financial burdens borne by livestock producers and family ranchers.

The impacts are not only financial. Big game populations are put at risk by unmanaged wolf populations, threatening the health of fragile wildlife populations and overall biological diversity.

H.R. 1819, The State Wildlife Management Act of 2011 takes a commonsense approach to this problem by granting states the right to manage wolf populations in their states, provided that populations stay above the minimum numbers specified in the bill. Should wolf populations fall below the specified thresholds, they become a temporarily protected species until their population rebounds. This allows the states to manage wolf populations with regulated harvest, permits states to maintain healthy populations of other big game species, while protecting ranchers and livestock farmers from loss of cattle and other livestock from wolves.

Introduced May 10, 2011

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

Original Cosponsors:

- Rep. Jeff Flake (AZ)
- Rep. Jim Matheson (UT)
- Rep. Cynthia Lummis (WY)
- Rep. Rob Bishop (UT)
- Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT)
- Rep. John Kline (MN)
- Rep. Dan Benishek (MI)

States Affected:

- Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nevada, Colorado, Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico.

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