

May 9, 2013

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell:

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of the Interior. We write on behalf of our millions of members to express deep concern about plans by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to remove federal Endangered Species Act protections for wolves across nearly the entire lower-48 states. These plans would be disastrous for gray wolf recovery in the United States.

The gray wolf is one of the most iconic creatures of the American landscape, once roaming free throughout the United States. Beyond its role as a living symbol of our natural landscape, the wolf is a keystone species. Its presence is critical to maintaining the structure and integrity of native ecosystems. Unfortunately, centuries of trapping, hunting, and poisoning brought wolves in the lower-48 states to the brink of extinction. By the 1980s, outside of Minnesota, only a few small pockets of survivors remained.

Since the 1980s wolf recovery in America has had some great successes, from the reintroduction of wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains, to the revitalization of populations in the western Great Lakes states. But there are still few, if any, wolves in the vast majority of their former range, where, in many places, scientists have determined that there is excellent suitable habitat. Maintaining federal protections for wolves is essential for continued species recovery, and the unwarranted assault on wolves that commenced in Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho after wolves in those states lost federal protections highlights the increasingly hostile anti-wolf policies of states now charged with ensuring the survival of gray wolf populations.

Today we stand at a critical crossroads for wolf recovery. Will we halt our nation's commitment to bringing back wolves, or will we press on, to give wolves a chance to again roam in prime habitat in places like the Pacific Northwest, northern California, the southern Rocky Mountains, and the Northeast? We strongly urge you and your Department to maintain federal protections that preserve already-limited opportunities for wolves to recover in additional parts of the United States.

In your new role as Interior Secretary, the fate of wolves in the United States is largely in your hands. We urge you to work with the FWS to cancel plans to delist the gray wolf across much of the lower-48 states. Such a delisting would be premature and disastrous for gray wolf recovery in our country. We would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you about this crucial conservation issue at your earliest convenience. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kieran Suckling
Executive Director
Center for Biological Diversity

Trip Van Noppen
President
Earthjustice

Leda Huta
Executive Director
Endangered Species Coalition

Jamie Rappaport Clark
President and CEO
Defenders of Wildlife

Frances Beinecke
President
**Natural Resources
Defense Council**

Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club