

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2013

The Honorable Dan Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Ashe:

We understand that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is conducting a status review of the gray wolf under the Endangered Species Act that may remove protections for gray wolves across large areas of the lower 48 states. The reintroduction of wolves into the northern Rocky Mountains and their resurgence in the western Great Lakes region have been important gains for a species once teetering on the brink of extinction, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service should be commended for its prominent role in these achievements. In other parts of their former range, however, wolves have only barely begun to recover. In particular, wolves have only just begun to return to portions of the Pacific Northwest, California, southern Rocky Mountains and Northeast and continue to need protection in these areas if they are to truly recover. It is our hope that you will retain Endangered Species Act protections for wolves in these areas. A blanket national delisting of the gray wolf would be premature and would not be grounded in peer-reviewed science.

The rebound of gray wolves in the western Great Lakes and northern Rocky Mountains has been a boon for local economies, wildlife enthusiasts, and the ecosystems of these areas that have benefitted from the return of this keystone predator. Studies in Yellowstone National Park found that the presence of wolves benefitted a myriad of species from pronghorn antelope, to songbirds, to beavers and fish.

While there is much to be proud of, there remains considerable progress to be made towards wolf recovery in the lower 48 states. In particular, we are concerned that the same prejudice towards wolves that led to their extirpation across nearly the entire coterminous United States is still present today and, not only is threatening to undo the gains achieved in the northern Rocky Mountains and western Great Lakes, but will prevent their recovery in additional areas. We believe that federal protection continues to be necessary to ensure that wolf recovery is allowed to proceed in additional parts of the country.

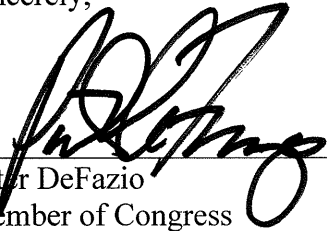
Wolves are beginning to make a comeback in Oregon and Washington and a little more than a year ago, a wolf dubbed OR-7 made his way to California to become the first wolf in the state for more than 80 years. Lone wolves have also crossed into Utah, Colorado,

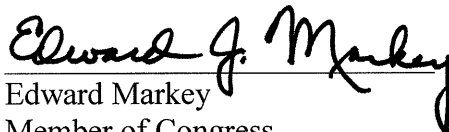
and several states in the Northeast. These are all areas that would benefit from continued Endangered Species Act protections.

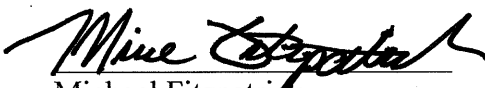
Wolf recovery in the lower 48 states is a wildlife success story in the making, and we encourage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to work towards greater recovery of this important and popular species. Specifically, we ask that the Service continue to protect wolves in the lower 48 states under the ESA.


Thank you for the work you and your staff have done over the years to make important gains in the gray wolf recovery program.

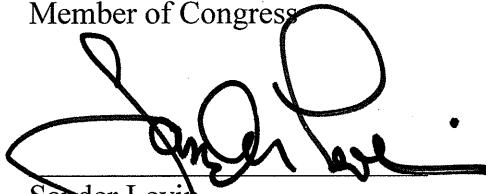
Sincerely,



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

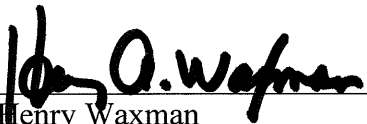

Edward Markey
Member of Congress



Michael Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



George Miller
Member of Congress

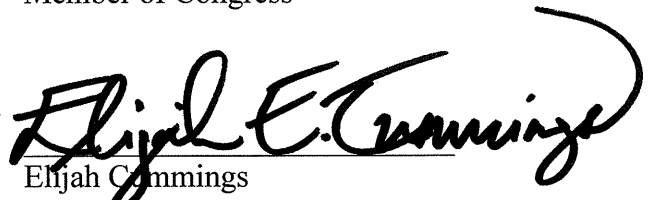

Sander Levin
Member of Congress

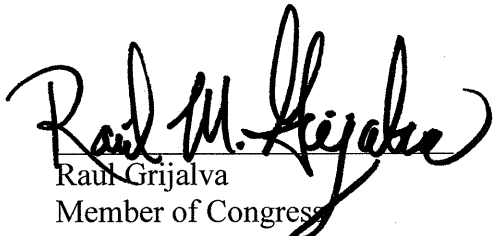

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

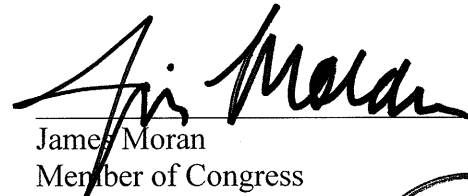

Henry Waxman
Member of Congress


Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress

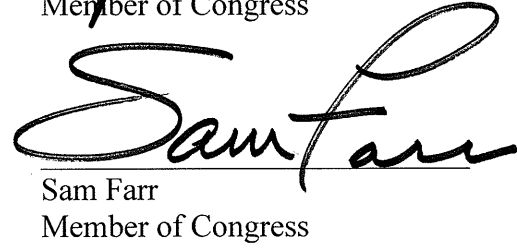

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress


Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress

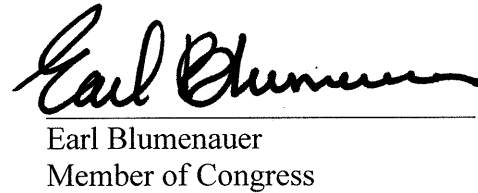

Raul Grijalva
Member of Congress


James Moran
Member of Congress

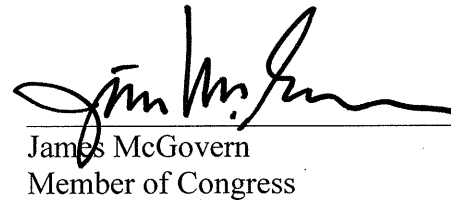

Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

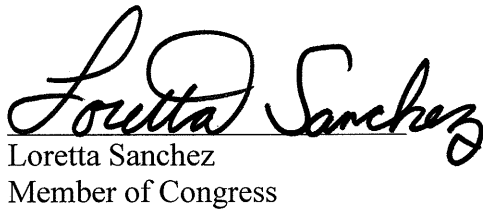

Sam Farr
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Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

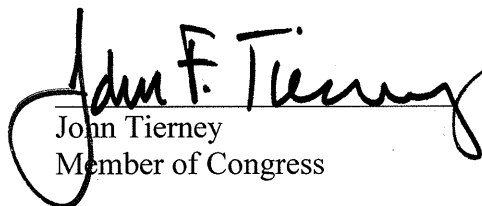

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress


Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

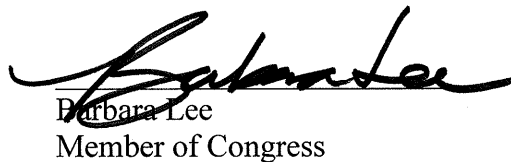

James McGovern
Member of Congress


Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

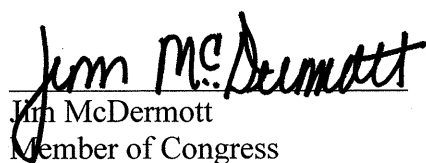

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

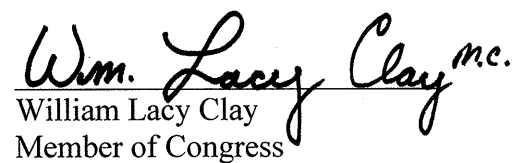

John Tierney
Member of Congress


Lois Capps
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

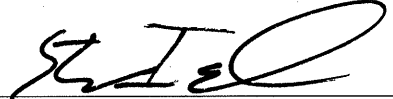

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress


Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

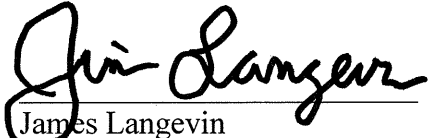

William Lacy Clay^{m.c.}
Member of Congress



Micael Honda
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



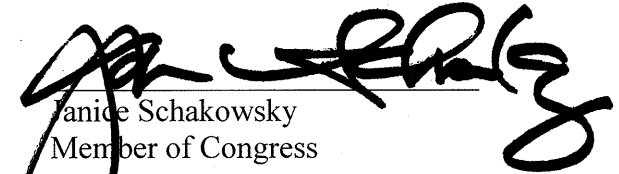
James Langevin
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Adam Schiff
Member of Congress



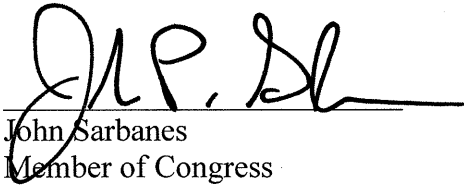
Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



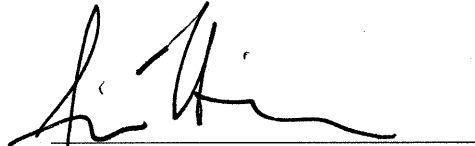
John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



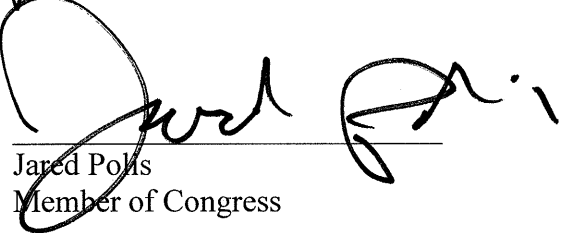
Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



James Himes
Member of Congress



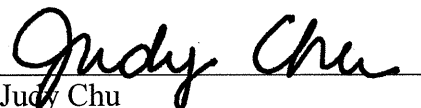
Gary Peters
Member of Congress



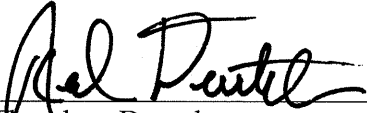
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



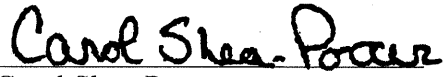
Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



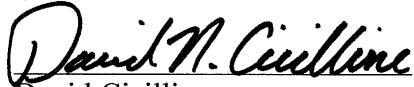
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



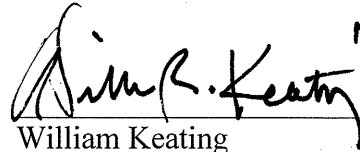
Theodore Deutch
Member of Congress



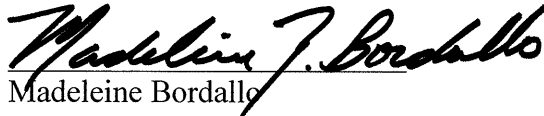
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



David Cicilline
Member of Congress




William Keating
Member of Congress



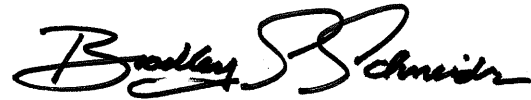
Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress



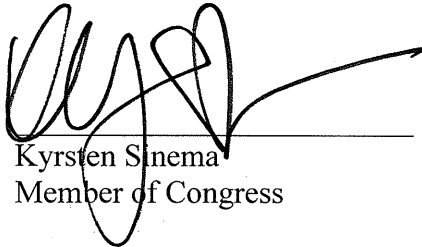
Ron Barber
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bradley Schneider
Member of Congress



Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress