

August 4, 2021

Honorable Tom Vilsack
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
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Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We, the undersigned, represent organizations working to protect wildlife on national public lands. We are dismayed to learn that USDA's Idaho Wildlife Services federal agents under your leadership have been involved in killing wolf pups between January and June 2021 on public lands managed by the USDA Forest Service.

Wolves are already under attack by the State of Idaho, which has violated its agreement with the federal government to manage wolves like mountain lions and black bears. On May 5, 2021 Idaho Governor Brad Little signed legislation calling for the eradication of 90 percent of the state wolf population. No other species are managed at this dramatically low population level.

The recent Idaho anti-wolf legislation harkens back a century ago when wolves were brutally eradicated from the American West:

- Established funding for glorified bounties on dead wolves.
- Allow hunters and trappers to kill newborn pups as small as only 3 pounds.
- Hire private contractors to trap and snare entire packs of wolves.
- Allow for a hunter or trapper to kill limitless wolves.

This new attack on wolves violates the formal agreements that Idaho made to the federal government when they agreed to maintain a minimum (not maximum) of 150 wolves at the lowest point in the year and to maintain adequate regulatory mechanisms to guarantee connectivity within the three subpopulations making up the Northern Rockies metapopulation. Idaho's mismanagement is occurring in tandem with the killing of wolves done by Wildlife Services at the behest of the livestock industry. We note the stated "vision" of Wildlife Service is "to improve the coexistence of people and wildlife. The program recognizes that the entire field of wildlife damage management is in a period of change, and those involved with this field must consider a wide range of public interests that can conflict with one another. These interests include wildlife conservation, biological diversity, and the welfare of animals, as well as the use of wildlife for purposes of enjoyment, recreation and livelihood." Further, the vision statement concludes "The WS program strives to develop and use wildlife damage management strategies that are biologically sound, environmentally safe, and socially acceptable."

There is nothing biologically sound or socially acceptable about killing wolf pups on federal lands, especially when wolves are under significant eradication pressure. Wolf pups pose no threat to domestic livestock--in Idaho, or anywhere in the Western United States.

We are requesting that you immediately suspend the killing of wolf pups on all public lands by the USDA's federal agents.

Signed,
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