



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENT TO APPROVE FEDERAL LEGISLATION THAT WOULD RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF THE GRAY WOLF FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST IN MONTANA.

WHEREAS, in 2002, the gray wolf population in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming achieved the biological requirement of a minimum of 30 breeding pairs and at least 300 wolves in a metapopulation in the Northern Rocky Mountains, a threshold established by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to conclude that the gray wolf is recovered and should be delisted; and

WHEREAS, the tristate wolf population has remained on the rise with an estimated 115 breeding pairs and 1,706 wolves total at the end of 2009, including an estimated minimum of 37 breeding pairs and 524 wolves in Montana; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has maintained a federally approved wolf management plan for several years and has proven that the plan, including the use of a public hunt, will maintain a secure, viable population of gray wolves in Montana; and

WHEREAS, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has delisted the gray wolf in Montana twice (on March 28, 2008, and on May 4, 2009), and despite proven, effective state management, the species has been relisted both times by court ruling; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has joined with the United States Departments of Interior and Justice in defense of the delisting decision and to appeal the most recent court ruling relisting the gray wolf because state management of the species is the preferred alternative to federal management of state wildlife; and

WHEREAS, even if the appeal is successful and the gray wolf is delisted in Montana, certain organizations may continue to challenge the delisting and state management of the gray wolf; and

WHEREAS, the relisting of the gray wolf in Montana has stripped the state of its ability to most effectively manage gray wolves at a time when biological and social impacts of the species are exceeding carrying capacity;

and

WHEREAS, any delay in the delisting of the gray wolf will exacerbate these negative biological and social impacts and erode the broad base of public support Montana has developed for its management of the gray wolf; and

WHEREAS, the 62nd Legislature believes that federal legislation is the most effective way to ensure that the gray wolf is removed from the endangered species list in Montana and to ensure that management of the species will remain with the state and the state agency best suited to successfully maintain a secure, viable gray wolf population in Montana.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the 62nd Legislature:

- (1) fully supports the transfer of management of the gray wolf to the state of Montana;
- (2) defends the efforts of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to remove the gray wolf from the federal and state endangered species lists;
- (3) urges Congress to quickly pass federal legislation that will result in the immediate removal of the gray wolf from the endangered species list in Montana and ensure the ability of the state to continue its successful management of the species; and
- (4) urges the President and the President's administration to fully support such legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Montana Congressional Delegation, the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, and the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within joint resolution,
HJ 0001, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2011.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2011.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 1

INTRODUCED BY M. MILBURN

BY REQUEST OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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