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U.S. Sen. Johnson: Supports Wisconsin Farm Bureau, encourages passage of Gray Wolves bill

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Contact:
Ben Voelkel
Paige Alwood

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WASHINGTON — Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) offered written testimony Wednesday in support of his bill to return control over the protection of gray wolves in Wisconsin and other states to federal wildlife experts rather than federal judges.

Senator Johnson offered written testimony Wednesday to a hearing by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on potential reforms to the Endangered Species Act. The bipartisan legislation introduced by Senator Johnson last month with Committee Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) would delist the gray wolf in Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota and Wyoming under the Endangered Species Act. U.S. Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wis.) has sponsored similar legislation in the House of Representatives.

Excerpts of the written testimony submitted by Senator Johnson for the hearing are below:

“I am glad the committee invited Jim Holte from the Wisconsin Farm Bureau to provide insights on the Endangered Species Act’s unintended, negative consequences**.** I strongly agree with what I have heard directly from Mr. Holte and

other stakeholders including farmers, ranchers, loggers and sportsmen — that all future gray wolf listing decisions should be made by experts in the field, not judges in courtrooms.

“In order to correct the misguided judicial action, I first introduced legislation two years ago with Chairman Barrasso requiring the Department of the Interior to reissue the respective 2011 and 2012 delisting decisions for Great Lakes and Wyoming gray wolves. Unfortunately, Congress did not take action on our bill last session. I was pleased to reintroduce the Johnson-Barrasso legislation, S.164, this year with the welcome addition of bipartisan support.

“I am hopeful this committee and Congress will pass S.164 soon and note our bill takes a sensible approach that allows states to manage gray wolf populations while not modifying the Endangered Species Act. The bill also does not prevent Fish and Wildlife Service experts from ever returning the wolf to the endangered list if it determines the population is in need of federal protection. This legislation provides us an example of how states and the federal government can work together towards reasonable, common-sense solutions for ecosystem preservation.”

Sen. Johnson’s full written statement can be seen here.
Watch Jim Holte’s full testimony in front of the EPW Committee here.

The full text of S.164 can be seen here.