

U.S. Rep. Tiffany: Applauds removal of gray wolf from federal endangered list

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WASHINGTON, DC - The Department of Interior today announced a new rule de-listing the Gray Wolf in the lower 48 states, allowing state and tribal governments to develop their own locally-tailored management rules to reflect the unique conditions and needs of their own jurisdictions.

“Today’s announcement represents an important first step toward restoring local control over the skyrocketing gray wolf population in Wisconsin” said Rep. Tom Tiffany. “For too long, the Endangered Species Act has been a statutory ‘Hotel California,’ where well-funded, radical environmental groups see to it that animals ‘check-in’ to the federal ESA list - but never leave.”

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service initially pegged the wolf recovery goal at 100 for the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Wisconsin. Yet that population had grown to nearly 1,000 — far exceeding initial recovery goals — by 2017. And recent reports put the population of wolves even higher. This burgeoning number of wolves has placed a financial strain on Wisconsin taxpayers, with the Department of Natural Resources being forced to pay out millions in wolf-related damages to sportsmen and livestock owners since the original listing.

Tiffany noted that the rule change may only provide temporary relief given the potential for politically charged litigation and partisan interference with state management priorities.

“Wisconsin’s rural communities have been a ping-pong ball bouncing back and forth between listings and de-listings for years,” Tiffany said. “Secretary Bernhardt and

Director Skipwith deserve credit for providing this long-overdue relief – but I look forward to working with the Trump administration on a permanent legislative solution that prevents any future federal interference in our local efforts to manage these predators.”

Tiffany introduced comprehensive legislation to permanently empower states to manage wolf populations shortly after he was sworn in this year. The bill has been endorsed by a variety of agriculture groups and sportsman’s advocates.

“Today is a big win for Wisconsin, but there is more work to do,” added Tiffany. “We need to permanently restore wolf management authority in law to where it belongs: The capable hands of state policymakers and fish and game agencies.”

Tiffany concluded by encouraging those state officials to authorize a wolf hunt before the end of the year.

“The Wisconsin DNR should immediately move to authorize a wolf hunting season in 2020,” Tiffany said. “Wisconsin sportsmen want it, and they are counting on us to deliver.”