



Attn: Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage
Re: SB 139 – Establishing a Statewide Wolf Population Goal
Position: Support
Date: September 19, 2023

Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage,

I write you today on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) to express support for Senate Bill 139, introduced by Wisconsin Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus Co-Chair Senator Rob Stafsholt, which would require that when implementing a statewide wolf management plan (WMP), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) must include a wolf population goal within that plan. I respectfully request that the honorable members of this Committee support the passage of SB 139.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Including a numeric population goal within WMPs is a common practice followed by state wildlife management agencies across the country where wolves exist. Without a numeric goal, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will not have an accurate frame of reference to evaluate whether its WMP is operating as intended. Wisconsin is home to roughly 1,100 wolves, which freely range in and out of Minnesota and Michigan, creating a regional population exceeding 4,000 wolves. CSF contends that this wolf population has fully recovered and is fit to be delisted and actively managed by the individual states. However, without a mandatory population goal, the DNR cannot implement management practices that aim to achieve a specific outcome, which will likely cause wolf populations to continue to grow beyond what is healthy for not only wolves, but cattle, elk, deer, and other Wisconsin game species.

This bill remedies the possibility that the DNR may exclude a numeric population goal from its final WMP, which would render the plan ineffective, because without a measurable goal, the DNR cannot possibly evaluate whether its management practices are achieving intended results. To protect the ecosystems and wildlife populations of Wisconsin, CSF recommends that the DNR establish a population goal that is lower than the state's current wolf population, which this bill makes possible. I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments and welcome any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert Matthews

Senior Coordinator, Great Lakes States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
rmatthews@congressionalsportsmen.org | 517-210-2890

Your Inside Connection to Outdoor Legislation