



Representative Gosar,

I am writing to express deep concern regarding the ongoing impact of the Mexican gray wolf population on rural communities, ranchers, hunters, and public safety in New Mexico.

The unintended consequences of the reintroduction of the Mexican gray wolf have placed a significant strain on those who live and work in the affected regions. Ranchers, in particular, have borne the brunt of this policy. Livestock depredation by wolves has become a costly and emotionally taxing issue. Confirmed wolf kills result in financial losses ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per cow, and many more incidents go unconfirmed due to stringent inspection guidelines. These losses are not just economic—they represent the erosion of livelihoods built over generations.

Moreover, the stress inflicted on cattle by the presence of wolves leads to decreased conception rates and increased management costs, compounding the burden on small, family-run ranches. Although compensation programs exist, they fall short of covering the true cost of damages, leaving ranchers under-supported and vulnerable.

Hunters also face challenges, as the presence of wolves disrupts game populations and alters natural behaviors. This affects both recreational hunting and wildlife management efforts, creating tension between conservation goals and traditional land use practices.

Public safety is another growing concern. As wolf populations expand, encounters near homes, schools, and public lands have become more frequent. In rural areas, residents have voiced fears about the proximity of wolf packs to populated zones. The federal government has acknowledged these concerns, noting the increasing risks to health and safety.

It is clear that a more balanced approach is needed—one that respects the rights and well-being of New Mexico's rural communities. I urge policymakers and wildlife agencies to consider reforms that allow for more effective management of wolf populations, increased support for affected ranchers, and greater transparency in depredation reporting.

Let's work for the good of New Mexico and ALL western states.

Sincerely,

Vickie Marquardt

Otero County Commission, Chair