



Arizona State Legislature

RESOLUTION

DEMANDING THE IMMEDIATE DELISTING OF THE MEXICAN WOLF FROM THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST, DEFUNDING OF THE NONESSENTIAL EXPERIMENTAL MEXICAN WOLF REINTRODUCTION PROJECT, RESTORATION OF LOCAL CONTROL OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MEXICAN WOLF IN THE STATES, AND FULL AND TIMELY COMPENSATION FOR ALL DIRECT AND INDIRECT LOSSES CAUSED BY MEXICAN WOLVES.

WHEREAS, in 1998, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) initiated the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project (MWRP) under Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and began introducing captive bred Mexican wolves into Arizona and New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 10(j) of the ESA, the USFWS determined that the release of Mexican wolves in the United States was for purely "experimental" purposes and that one hundred percent of the Mexican wolves currently located in the United States are "not essential" to the continued survival of the species; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, the population of Mexican wolves in the United States met and exceeded the USFWS's original goal of 100 wolves, yet the Mexican wolf was not delisted from the endangered species list, prolonging uncertainty for local communities and perpetuating greater legal protections for wolves than private property rights in the name of forced coexistence and radical environmentalism; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the USFWS expanded the Mexican Wolf Nonessential Experimental Population Area (MWNEPA) to cover all lands in Arizona and New Mexico south of I-40, including Southeast Arizona, where nearly 3.6 million acres of pristine grazing land, the largest horse farm in the state, a premier auction house, and numerous guest ranches and working ranches make livestock a part of the customs, culture, traditions, and economy of the region; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the USFWS set a new threshold for delisting the Mexican wolf—which was not based on the best scientific and commercial data available—requiring an outrageous eight-year moving average of 320 wolves sustained over three years and forces ranchers to continue feeding wolves without their consent; and

WHEREAS, 320-wolf requirement is not backed by science, exceeds the natural carrying capacity of the land, and cannot be sustained without cattle, which are not native to the Mexican wolf's historical range; and

WHEREAS, the Mexican wolf is a vicious predator that requires large populations of natural ungulate prey such as deer and elk to sustain its diet, yet recent samples of Mexican wolf scat tested show over seventy percent contained cattle DNA; and

WHEREAS, Southeast Arizona does not include a large population of natural ungulate prey such as deer and elk—yet by the end of 2024, USFWS reported there were 286 wolves in the wild in the United States, marking an eleven percent increase over year-end 2023 and the ninth consecutive year of growth—demonstrating that, without cattle, the Mexican wolf population would have never been able to reach 286 wolves without relying on ranchers' private property for prey and that, in the United States, the Mexican wolf population will never reach 320 wolves without continuing to use America's cattle as prey; and

WHEREAS, the increasing reliance on livestock and expanding encroachment of Mexican wolves into Southeast Arizona has resulted in violent attacks in local communities and concerning incidents near residential homes, including incidents involving pets and children, which threaten rural families and have forced some communities to install caged bus stops for children; and

WHEREAS, in January 2025 alone, at least twenty-two local cattle and horses were killed in Southeast Arizona due to Mexican wolves, including several confirmed kills and additional depredations suspected but unverified due to burdensome federal procedures that fail to recognize all forms of livestock loss and wolf predation; and

WHEREAS, one wolf can cause between \$69,000 and \$162,000 in direct and indirect losses to a local rancher, with total indirect losses ranging from \$1.4 million to \$3.4 million—creating significant economic damage to local communities and substantial financial devastation to ranching families that have called this land home for generations; and

WHEREAS, while Section 10(j) allows ranchers to defend their livestock on private land, Zone 2 regulations for the MWNEPA in Southeast Arizona prohibit ranchers from protecting their property on federal lands, where the majority of grazing occurs; and

WHEREAS, while the USFWS's Mexican Wolf Population Monitoring and Location Information Dissemination Procedures (SOP 26.1) allows the USFWS to know the exact location of each pack in real time, ranchers and other parties that are directly affected by Mexican wolf depredations are not provided this information—preventing ranchers from being able to take proactive measures to protect livestock before attacks occur; and

WHEREAS, when wolves strike, the burden of proof to confirm kills is nearly impossible, as the new Operating Procedures of Domestic Livestock and Pet Depredations (SOP 11.1) restricts evidence of Mexican wolf depredations to subcutaneous hemorrhaging alone, regardless of the fact that other states like Idaho and Montana accept other valid indicators, thereby limiting access to state and federal compensation; and

WHEREAS, compensation programs currently exclude indirect losses such as reduced weight gain, veterinary care, breeding impacts, or long-term herd disruptions, leaving ranchers to absorb much of the financial burden themselves—even as federal agencies spend tens of millions annually on the program—and resulting in payouts that are insultingly low and don't cover the full cost of the MWRP on local ranchers, such as the \$325,000 lost by one Arizona ranch in a single year; and

WHEREAS, over \$220 million has been spent on the MWRP in the United States to-date—representing approximately \$500,000 to \$1 million per wolf—despite 90 percent of the species' historical range lying in Mexico, while local governments like Cochise County and Catron County have spent hundreds of thousands to protect their citizens against the wolf; and

WHEREAS, the projected cost to American taxpayers of maintaining the MWRP through 2030 is estimated to be between \$47 million and \$59 million—not including compensation funds or administrative overhead—and is not justified when the original population goal of 100 wolves was met and exceeded in 2014; and

WHEREAS, the original political circumstances that led to the Mexican wolf's near extinction in the mid-1900s—which included the use of excessive government funded predator control measures like traps and poisons under Progressive Era administrations—went above and beyond merely property defense and have long since ended, eliminating the risk that delisting the Mexican wolf today would require relisting in the future; and

WHEREAS, the Arizona Game and Fish Department is equipped to manage the Mexican wolf in Arizona with an appropriate balance between ecological, economic, and public health and safety interests; and

WHEREAS, making the delisting of the Mexican wolf in a purely "experimental" and "nonessential" portion of the Mexican wolf's historic range contingent on reaching a population that can only be sustained through the use of non-historical sources of prey—such as cattle, horses, and pets—is a major question of vast economic and political significance that can only be required through the adoption of clear and explicit congressional authorization, which has not been provided; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the ESA is to recover species to the point where the measured afforded under the ESA are no longer required; and

WHEREAS, based on the best scientific and commercial data available—including the current population count, the maximum population that likely could have been sustained by historical non-livestock sources of prey alone, and the lack of overt government predator control programs that seek to extirpate the wolf once it is delisted—the Mexican wolf in the United States has met and far exceeded the minimum population necessary for delisting, has sufficiently recovered, is no longer at risk of extinction in its historical range, and is no longer in need of the protections afforded by the ESA; **NOW**,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the below-signed members of the Arizona State Legislature that:

1. The Mexican wolf in the United States is "not essential" to the continued survival of the species.
2. The Mexican wolf should be immediately delisted from the Endangered Species List.
3. The Nonessential Experimental Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project should be immediately defunded.
4. Management of the Mexican wolf should be turned over to the states and local control.
5. Ranchers should be allowed to protect their private property on all lands, including federal leases.
6. SOP 26.1 should be immediately modified to give ranchers real time data on Mexican wolf locations.
7. SOP 11.0 should be immediately reinstated to restore commonsense standards for verifying kills.
8. Ranchers should be fully and promptly compensated for all economic losses, including direct and indirect.
9. American taxpayers and ranchers should not be responsible for feeding and recovering this wild animal.

ADOPTED this 23rd day of May, 2025.

SIGNED



Gail Griffin
Representative, District 19



Lupe Diaz
Representative, District 19



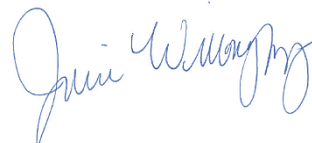
David Gowan
Senator, District 19



Steve B. Montenegro
Speaker of the House
District 29



Janae Shamp
Senate Majority Leader
District 29



Julie Willoughby
House Majority Whip
District 13



T.J. Shope
President Pro Tempore
District 16



Teresa Martinez
Representative, District 16



Chris Lopez
Representative, District 16



John Gillette
Representative, District 30



David Marshall, Sr.
Representative, District 7



Walter Blackman
Representative, District 7



James Taylor
Representative, District 29



David Livingston
Representative, District 28



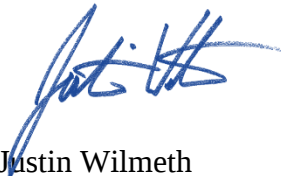
David Farnsworth
Senator, District 10



Ralph Heap
Representative, District 10



John Kavanagh
Senator, District 3



Justin Wilmeth
Representative, District 2



Vince Leach
Senator, District 17



Rachel Keshel
Representative, District 17