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PRESS RELEASES

Simpson's Wolf Language Included in Final Funding Bill

Continuing resolution includes language overturning court decision to return wolves in Idaho and Montana to endangered species list

Washington, Apr 12 -

Idaho Congressman Mike Simpson issued the following statement today regarding language providing for the delisting of the Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population in western states that is included in H.R. 1473, the FY2011 Continuing Resolution. H.R. 1473 will be considered by the House and Senate later this week. Simpson is Chairman of the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, which oversees funding for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"I am confident that this language gets us closer to our ultimate goal, which is seeing the entire Northern Rocky Mountain wolf population taken off the endangered species list and managed exclusively by the states," said Simpson. "Not only do wolf populations in the west far exceed recovery goals, but without proper management they have become so robust that they are adversely impacting other wildlife populations in the region and are spilling into other states not in the original recovery area. This language takes an important first step by allowing for a wolf hunt this year in Idaho and Montana and allowing Wyoming to move closer to developing an approved state management plan."

Simpson's language overturns the August 2010 decision by a district court in Montana to put wolves in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Utah back on the endangered species list, in spite of the fact that these populations have met and exceeded recovery goals. H.R. 1473 directs the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to reissue its 2009 decision to delist wolves in Idaho and Montana and allows for state management, including managed hunts, in those states this year. The language also protects the ability of the state of Wyoming to negotiate its own state management plan, which, once approved, would allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to delist the entire Northern Rocky Mountain population.

The language comes on the heels of a decision this weekend by District Court Judge Molloy to reject a proposed settlement between environmental groups and the federal government that would have restored state management of wolves in Idaho and Montana. Judge Molloy's decision means wolves will remain on the federally protected list indefinitely without congressional action.

"Judge Molloy's decision has left little doubt that without the passage of my language wolves would remain under unnecessary federal protection indefinitely," said Simpson. "If the courts are incapable of recognizing when a species is fully recovered, then Congress will have to make that determination for them. I am glad to see Congress confirm the original intent of the endangered species act by moving to return to state control the management of a species that has met and surpassed even the most optimistic recovery goals."

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