

January 25, 2022

The Honorable Representative Gary Howell,
Chair, Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
Lansing, Michigan

Dear Chair Howell and Natural Resources and Outdoor Committee Members:

I am writing today as a private citizen and avid hunter to support the Senate and House resolutions that ask the Natural Resources Commission (NRC) to establish a wolf hunting season this year.

I've been following the population growth of wolves in Michigan during my lifetime and it is my opinion that we are well past the saturation point of having too many wolves in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. I am a believer that if the wolf is to be accepted in Michigan by the majority of UP residents and landowners, we need to keep the number of wolves in the UP well below the current low-end estimates of 695 wolves. Instead, we need to keep population levels to more reasonable levels of wolves in the 300-400 level, still well above the 200-wolf level established by the State of Michigan for full recovery of wolves in Michigan. To reduce this overpopulation level of wolves, and to begin building support among UP residents and landowners for wolves, I believe we need to engage in sound wildlife management as soon as possible, and control its population at more reasonable levels with regulated hunting and trapping, starting this fall.

My own experience in the UP is that fifteen years ago, seeing a wolf was a really rare experience. In contrast, in the last four months of 2021, I photographed dozens and dozens of wolves on my property, including some who walked right through my backyard. I have a stunning portfolio of wolf pictures from my property that clearly demonstrate just how much this alpha predator is now dominating the UP forest. Count me as one knowledgeable wolf watcher who believes the DNR is vastly undercounting the number of wolves in the UP. It is my opinion that virtually all of my neighbors also believe wolves are undercounted and those neighbors also support a wolf hunt to keep wolves at more reasonable levels.

So, I strongly encourage you to request that the NRC approve a wolf hunt for 2022 so we can start managing wolves like we should be. In my opinion, we don't need further studies and more data to tell us what to do. It is common sense what we need to do.

I need to note that I am a board member of both the National Deer Association and the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, and I am a member of Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, the NRA, and other wildlife conservation and pro-hunting groups. These are my personal views and not necessarily the views of organizations I am affiliated with. I am also proud to be a former state employee of 34 years (now retired) who served in some of state government's top financial positions over my career, including state CFO and controller under Gov. Engler and deputy director at MDOT under Gov. Granholm. In those roles, I worked very closely with both the legislature and with the DNR.

I apologize that I can't be present at your hearing in person because of a medical appointment that has me traveling to the UP. I'd be glad to discuss this issue further with you in the future.

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Thank you for considering my views and thank you for your service to Michigan and its citizens.

Sincerely,

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cc: Molly Wingrove, Committee Clerk

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