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October 4, 2017

Representative Gary Howell
Chair, Natural Resources Committee
Michigan House of Representatives

Hand delivered and via email: Joy Brewer, Committee Clerk, joybrewer@house.mi.gov

Re: Opposition to HR 154, House Natural Resources Committee Meeting, October 4, 2017

Dear Rep. Howell and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. The organization's Board of Directors voted to **oppose HR 154**.

Sandhill cranes have been protected in Michigan for 101 years, during which time their numbers have rebounded from near extinction. The result of a successful conservation effort to save these birds should not be a hunting season.

The reasons given in support of HR 154 are not persuasive.

- Crop damage: there is a current system whereby farmers obtain a USFWS permit to target "nuisance" birds at the time and place where they are creating the nuisance; there is no evidence that this system is not working
- Source of food ("offer Michigan residents an opportunity to harvest exceptional game meat"): most Michigan residents do not hunt (5% according to Michigan statistics in the 2011 US Fish and Wildlife Service National Surveyⁱ, the most recent) and because a few will eat the kill is not good reason to institute a season
- "A hunting season will benefit farmers, hunters, and the growing Sandhill crane population": no rationale has been provided as to how the Sandhill crane population will benefit

In September 2014, Russ Mason, the MDNR's wildlife division chief said of the possibility of a Sandhill crane season: "should it ever become a burning issue, rest assured that all interests will have an equal seat at the table and a strong voice."ⁱⁱ

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Attorneys for Animals asks this Committee to give opponents to Sandhill crane hunting “an equal seat and a strong voice,” and to oppose HR 154.

Very Truly Yours,



Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD
President

ⁱ <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/fhw11-mi.pdf> U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. According to this study (at page 19 of 94: 501,000 hunters were MI residents. MI population in 2011 was 9,920,621:

<https://www.opendatanetwork.com/entity/0400000US26/Michigan/demographics.population.count?year=2011>

ⁱⁱ <https://howardmeyerson.com/2014/09/19/sandhill-cranes-rebound-in-michigan-opens-hunt-possibilities/>

This appears in the Jackpine Warbler, the magazine of [Michigan Audubon](#).