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PUBLIC COMMENT
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, JULY 15, 2021 9:00AM
OKEMOS CONFERENCE CENTER, COMFORT INN OKEMOS
OKEMOS, MI 48864

Chair Rose and members of the Natural Resources Commission:

Good morning. My name is Bee Friedlander, board president of Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA), and a member of the Wolf Management Advisory Council.

It is good to be back to in person meetings after nearly one and a half years. Over this period, we've all seen the high level of interest in the work of the NRC as members of the public have attended virtually and spoken during Public Comment on a variety of issues.

I encourage the Commission to prioritize establishing hybrid meetings as soon as possible with a goal of having the technology available at the August 12 meeting. As you consider important issues in the upcoming months, you will benefit from hearing a variety of opinions and engaging with people which is best accomplished when your meetings allow both in person and remote attendance and participation.

One of those issues is Michigan's wolf management plan. This is what I want to address in the balance of my time, in what I call "A Tale of Three States" (with apologies to Charles Dickens).

I refer of course to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. The three of us share the population of wolves in the western Great Lakes region. Since the de-listing became final in January 2021, WI and MN have taken very different approaches to management of these animals:

Wisconsin: the February hunt resulted in the killing of 218 wolves in less than three days, 83% more than the state's goal of 119. Key findings from a studyⁱ published just this month include:

- the state's wolf population declined by about 1/3 (27 to 33%) between April 2020 and April 2021 (using conservative methods)
- this contradicts the state's objective " ... to allow for a sustainable harvest that neither increases nor decreases the state's wolf population"
- incidences of poaching rise "significantly" when wolf killing is legalⁱⁱ

Minnesota: by comparison, is taking a more cautious approach. Last week, DNR officials announced that there will be no wolf hunting or trapping season in 2021, while they await a new management plan expected in early

2022. The Wolf Advisory Committee was formed in summer 2020 to evaluate and update the state's 20-year-old plan.

Michigan: like Minnesota, we may but are not required to hold a hunt. The Wolf Management Advisory Council was named in March 2021. DNR officials gave an estimate to Commissioners at NRC meetings that the WMAC's report will be available by spring 2022 to submit to this commission. The WMAC will not have its first meeting until early August, a later start than anticipated when it was formed. It is crucial that the process not be rushed to meet a false deadline of having a 2021 hunting/trapping season.

We call on both the NRC and DNR to model the Minnesota process. It would be fitting and proper to announce at the WMAC August 4 meeting that the time-frame for the Council's work will not be rushed.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beatrice M. Friedlander".

Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD
Board President

ⁱ Treves A, Santiago-Ávila FJ, Putrevu K. 2021. Quantifying the effects of delisting wolves after the first state began lethal management. PeerJ 9:e11666 <https://doi.org/10.7717/peerj.11666>

ⁱⁱ Santiago-Ávila, Chappell & Treves, 2020; Louchouart et al., 2021