



August 16, 2023

Kelly Susewind, Director
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Natural Resources Building
1111 Washington St. SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Dear Director Susewind,

The Sportsmen's Alliance, on behalf of our members and supporters in Washington state, submits the following comments on the proposed Draft "Periodic Status Review for the Gray Wolf" (May 2023). As the draft presents the compelling story of the amazing recovery of gray wolves in the state, we fully support your recommended reclassification of the species to "sensitive" under state law.

Gray wolf recovery in Washington, and throughout much of the West, has been significant over the past 2-3 decades. Washington wolves were listed as endangered by the state in 1980, but since 2008 the population has expanded on an annual basis by 23%. As of 2022, there are more than 200 wolves dispersed among 37 packs with 26 successful breeding pairs among them (Draft 2023). This is a remarkable recovery in a very short period of time.

Modeling future population trends illustrates that the gray wolf population will continue to expand, with wolves continuing to colonize unoccupied areas, even where lethal controls are in place. As the draft correctly points out, wolf populations remain stable in all states where lethal control or harvest is implemented as a management tool to effectively manage the species.

We agree that Washington's wolf population is "robust" and will be more effectively managed if downlisted to "sensitive" status. Throughout the draft, the science is clear, the species has recovered and should not be placed in permanent endangered status simply for the sake of doing so.

It is extremely unfortunate that there are groups and individuals who demand that, irrespective of what the data shows, wolves must be permanently protected as endangered. We

applaud your continued reliance on science and data to effectively manage fish and wildlife for the benefit of all people and future generations.

In closing, we are deeply concerned that Governor Inslee has decided to corrupt this process with direct communications attempting to influence your recommendation(s) or the final decision of the Fish and Wildlife Commission on the draft. Exerting this type of influence on the process is not only inappropriate and unethical, we are confident that this extreme behavior also runs contrary to what every citizen expects from an elected leader holding the highest office in the state.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Adkins', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Todd Adkins, PhD
Vice President of Government Affairs