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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Farm Groups ask for Gray Wolves to be Delisted from Endangered Species Act

This week the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) and the Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) joined together to ask the Minnesota Members of Congress to cosponsor legislation to reissue the December 2011 U.S. Department of Interior rule that would delist the Western Great Lakes Gray Wolves population in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and turn the management of the wolf back to state control.

MFBF and MFU encouraged members of the U.S. House of Representatives to sign onto Representative Ribble's bill alongside Congressmen Peterson, Emmer and Walz. They asked Senators Klobuchar and Franken that action be taken in the Senate to establish legislation similar to that in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Under state management the gray wolf population has far exceeded state and federal recovery goals. Even so, on December 19, 2014, U.S. District Judge Beryl Howell immediately reinstated Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections for gray wolves in Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin. This decision leaves farmers, ranchers and pet owners helpless in protecting their animals against wolf attacks. MFBF and MFU have been hearing devastating stories from members about the inability to protect livestock from these vicious attacks.

In order to meet delisting criteria set by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the gray wolf population needed to be between 1,251 and 1,400. Once turned over to state management, Minnesota set a minimum population of 1,600 wolves. The state's current wolf population is now more than 2,400, which far exceeds state and federal recovery goals. The State of Minnesota has done and will continue to do a good job of monitoring the population to allow for a healthy population while also giving pet and livestock owners options to protect their animals.

MFBF and MFU are asking for management of the wolf population to be back under the control of the state not the ESA.