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STEVAN PEARCE
Second District, New Mexico

July 22, 2016

The Honorable Sally Jewell
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Jewell,

I write in response to the Investigative Report of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) Mexican Gray Wolf Program (MGWRP), issued on July 11, 2016 by the Office of the Inspector General (IG) for the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The IG's report substantiates numerous allegations of potentially illegal actions within the FWS's management of the MGWRP, thus casting doubt on the integrity of the program. The FWS has not publicly provided detailed answers or responses to the IG's report. I have written FWS Director Ashe requesting answers to several of the items detailed in the IG's investigation report.

On July 14, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the FY 2017 Interior Appropriations bill, including amendment language to zero out funding of the MGWRP. The United States District Court has issued an injunction on Mexican wolf introductions within the State of New Mexico. The General Accounting Office (GAO) has been requested to conduct a comprehensive review of the MGWRP and provide programmatic recommendations.

The Department of the Interior's IG has been requested to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the entire MGWRP. The IG's review up to this point was limited to only the accusations presented by Catron County, New Mexico in 2013. This limited report revealed numerous problems and justifies the need for a larger program wide review to ensure that the corruption is limited to what is reported in this initial investigation.

As Secretary, I expect that you routinely step back and take assessment of the performance of the agencies and bureaus under your steed. Taking into account the revelations in the initial IG's report, legal status of the program, and lack of public confidence, you are justified to intervene and halt all aspects of the MGWRP. I request this action be taken immediately, until detailed audits and investigations can be done to determine which path, if any, forward will best serve the species. This pause should include an immediate voluntary halt of all Mexican wolf reintroductions, as well as the transfer of the depredation program to the states. In the event a

state does not wish to have this program, then the United States Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Service (USDA-WS) should assume the role on behalf of that state. All funding for the MGWRP will remain the responsibility of the FWS, contingent upon appropriations.

Additionally, as substantiated by the IG's report, it is a liability to allow FWS Region 2 to maintain the day-to-day administration of the MGWRP. I recommend the management of the MGWRP be transferred to a FWS region that has gray wolf experience, such as Region 3, Region 6, or Region 7.

Thank you for your concern on this issue. If you wish to discuss in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress

Cc:

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
The Honorable James Inhofe
The Honorable Daniel Sullivan
The Honorable Ken Calvert
The Honorable Rob Bishop
The Honorable Paul Gosar
Commissioners of Catron County
Director of New Mexico Game and Fish Alexa Sandoval