

STATE SENATOR • MICHAEL PRUSI • 38TH DISTRICT

Prusi Press Release

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LEGISLATORS INTRODUCE BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS WOLF DEPREDATION AND LIVESTOCK PROTECTION

LANSING – State Sens. Mike Prusi and Ron Jelinek, along with state Reps. Mike Lahti and Kevin Green, today introduced legislation in response to concerns over livestock and domestic animal losses due to wolf attacks.

“After years of effort by the Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USF&WS) has finally returned management responsibility for gray wolves to the states, where it belongs,” said Prusi, D-Ishpeming.

“Wisconsin and Minnesota currently permit owners of domestic animals and livestock to defend their animals when they are attacked, and there is no reason why Michigan cannot do so as well.”

Michigan’s DNR director, in conjunction with her counterparts in Wisconsin and Minnesota, wrote the USF&WS in the spring of 2005 requesting that management of the growing gray wolf population be returned to state control. Earlier this year, after years of study, the USF&WS removed the gray wolf from the federal endangered species list in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, which gave the respective DNRs authority to manage the wolf population. The USF&WS will continue to monitor the state wolf population, and will relist the animal if it determines the wolf population has decreased to an endangered level.

“With the gray wolf population on the rise in Michigan, there has been an increase in beloved pets and valuable livestock being attacked and destroyed by wolves,” said Jelinek, R-Three Oaks. “Owners need to be able to protect their livestock from these predators either by capturing or destroying them. This bill will provide them with the authority and guidelines to do that.”

Currently, Michigan law requires the state to compensate livestock owners for livestock killed by wolves, but that compensation is dependent upon the Michigan DNR or USDA

Wildlife Services verifying that the loss was due to a wolf attack. Numerous U.P. farmers are not compensated for wolf-related livestock losses every year. Michigan law currently does not require or allow the state to compensate dog owners for dogs killed by wolves, though such compensation is available in Wisconsin.

The legislation, House Bills 5686 and 5687 and Senate Bills 1077 and 1084, would allow for the removal or capture of a gray wolf in the act of attacking a dog or livestock. The bill also requires the owner to report the taking of a gray wolf and transfer possession of the animal to the DNR as soon as possible.

“The bills Representative Lahti and I are introducing together are common sense proposals,” said Green, R-Wyoming. “If passed, this legislation would allow citizens to defend their livestock or pet from being killed by an attacking wolf. It is a modest approach for the law to reflect the natural desire of people to want to defend their livelihood or their family dog.”

“It makes sense that if a wolf is attacking a farmer's livestock, that farmer should be able to protect his animals,” said Lahti, D-Hancock.

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Sen. Prusi serves on the Senate Finance, Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs, Judiciary, and Energy Policy & Public Utilities Committees. He represents the 38th Senate District, which includes all Upper Peninsula counties west of Luce County.