



January 17, 2008

Governor Bill Richardson
Office of the Governor
490 Old Santa Fe Trail
Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

RE: IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION OF MEXICAN GRAY WOLF SOP 13

Dear Governor Richardson,

On July 6, 2007, you called for the immediate suspension of the use of Standard Operating Procedure 13 ("SOP 13") in New Mexico pending revisions to this procedure, which targets the critically endangered Mexican gray wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*). We applaud your bold intention to promote a healthy wolf population in our State. We are, however, frustrated that your intent has yet to be adequately executed by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish ("NMDGF"). On behalf of wolf supporters within our State and throughout our Nation, we implore you to direct the NMDGF to veto all future wolf removal orders unless and until there are 100 wild lobos, including 18 breeding pairs, living in the Southwest.

Since the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction and recovery program began in 1998, 66 lobos have been removed from the wild, most for conflicts with livestock. Thirty-one of these wolves were removed within the last two years alone under the punitive and unnecessary auspices of SOP 13. Two of these wolves, both adult females of the now abolished Aspen Pack, were removed just since your call for SOP 13's suspension. Considering that no more than 59 lobos have ever existed within the recovery area at any one given time, the currently high rate of wolf removal is neither supported by science nor sustainable. Today, there are just nine collared lobos in New Mexico. We simply cannot afford another wolf lost from the wild.

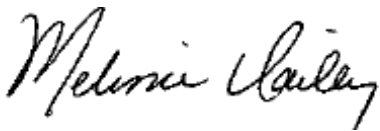
As you have well recognized, the Mexican gray wolf is a charismatic and integral part of New Mexico's natural heritage. By issuing the call for the suspension of SOP 13, the Office of the Governor has already made an important contribution towards protecting that natural heritage. It is now imperative that the NMDGF effectuates that intention through its membership on the Mexican wolf Adaptive Management Oversight Committee ("AMOC"). Because no wolf can be removed from New Mexico without the AMOC's approval, the NMDGF can, and should, block any and all future wolf removals within the State until we reach the 100-wolf threshold.

While the 100-wolf threshold is certainly not indicative of full recovery, reaching this population benchmark is perhaps the most important incremental step towards achieving real recovery for the Mexican gray wolf. The NMDGF has the authority to stop wolf killings and begin wolf recovery. Because the Mexican gray wolf is both a state and federally listed endangered species, the immediate implementation of that authority is both proper and necessary.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (“FWS”) is engaged in a misguided campaign of predator control in lieu of lobo recovery. Although the FWS is looking at new ways in which to better manage lobos, it will likely take years to cure the deficiencies of the current Mexican wolf management rules. We need immediate relief for wolves on the ground. Unlike any other species in modern history, the lobo faces the impending reality of suffering a second extinction in the wild.

Once again, we request that the Office of the Governor help place the Mexican gray wolf recovery program back on track by directing the NMDGF to stop supporting wolf removals in New Mexico. We thank you for your consideration of this important issue. Because time is of the essence for wolves, we look forward to your timely reply, and ask that you respond to this request by February 1, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Hailey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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