



To: Wisconsin Natural Resources Board
From: Jodi Habush Sinykin, Of Counsel, Midwest Environmental Advocates
Date: January 20, 2021
Re: Statement in Opposition to Mid-Winter Wolf Hunt 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony outlining the consequences of Wisconsin authorizing a rash and unsound 2021 wolf hunting and trapping season.

With wolves only recently returned to state management, Wisconsin would be wise to take it slow and smart with respect to management of this iconic species. Rushing to establish a wolf hunting and trapping season in the absence of an updated state management plan and wide public support will accomplish little, other than invite heightened controversy and litigation.

In order for state governments like Wisconsin to prove their capability to manage wolves in the absence of federal protections, our state must first demonstrate a strong commitment to science-based and representative wildlife management in keeping with Wisconsin's public trust obligations. At the present time, our state is in no position to meet this threshold. The biological and social science underlying Wisconsin's 1999 Wolf Management Plan is critically outdated. Wisconsin citizens and our state's scientists have yet to be afforded the opportunity to provide substantive input. Consultation with the Tribes, required by law, has not been done.

State decisions pertaining to wolves, particularly state-authorized hunting and trapping seasons and management plans, must be the product of a democratic and transparent process to ensure that a range of representative viewpoints are recognized. We need only look to Minnesota, which is wisely conducting an inclusive, science-driven, and transparent process to update their 2001 wolf plan *before* initiating a wolf hunting season. Wisconsin should do no less.

Act 169's wolf harvest mandate already compromises the state's and Tribes' ability to manage wolves in a sustainable and socially acceptable manner. A premature move to reinstate a wolf hunting and trapping season in Wisconsin underscores these actionable shortfalls and effectively disenfranchises Tribal nations within Wisconsin's borders and non-consumptive wildlife users—a course of action that is sure to invite legal challenges at the national and state level.

Accordingly, we ask that members of the Natural Resources Board act judiciously, mindful of good governance and best science, and refrain from backing an immediate wolf hunting and trapping season in Wisconsin.