

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Rep. Markkanen offered the following concurrent resolution:

1 A concurrent resolution to urge the Michigan Department of
2 Natural Resources, in coordination with the U.S. Department of the
3 Interior and the federal government, to re-establish a viable and
4 self-sustaining wolf population in the Lower Peninsula.

5 Whereas, The wildlife populations of the state and their
6 habitats are of paramount importance to the citizens of this state;
7 and

8 Whereas, Wolves are native to Michigan and were once present
9 in all 83 counties. However, persecution, habitat loss, and active
10 predator control programs throughout the 20th century led to the
11 near extinction of wolves from the state. By 1935, wolves were
12 extirpated from the Lower Peninsula, and by 1960, they had nearly
13 vanished from the Upper Peninsula (UP); and

14 Whereas, Gray wolves in Michigan have been protected under the

1 federal Endangered Species Act since 1974. Since then, Michigan's
2 gray wolves have made a remarkable comeback, which led to the
3 delisting of the gray wolf from the federal Endangered Species list
4 several times, most recently, effective January 4, 2021. On
5 February 10, 2022, U.S. District Judge Jeffrey White, of
6 California, reversed a 2020 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule
7 removing wolves from the list in 45 states, but not the Northern
8 Rockies, effectively relisting gray wolves in Michigan and the
9 Great Lakes States; and

10 Whereas, A viable and self-sustaining wolf population,
11 currently estimated at approximately 700 animals, has been re-
12 established in the UP since 2007, far surpassing the original goal
13 of around 200 set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the
14 Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR)'s Michigan Wolf
15 Recovery and Management Plan. However, a sustainable wolf
16 population has yet to be re-established in the Lower Peninsula; and

17 Whereas, The Lower Peninsula contains thousands of acres of
18 suitable wolf habitat, which is characterized by large areas of
19 contiguous forest and stable populations of wolves' preferred prey,
20 such as deer, rodents, and other small animals; and

21 Whereas, According to repeated statements from wolf advocates
22 who are residents of the Lower Peninsula, wolves play a key role in
23 improving the ecological systems in which they reside. Wolves
24 target weak, sick, or otherwise vulnerable prey, which can lead to
25 healthier populations of prey as well as increased availability of
26 food for scavengers. Additionally, introducing wolves into the
27 Lower Peninsula's predator base could possibly result in reducing
28 the spread of fatal diseases that continue to be prevalent in Lower
29 Peninsula deer populations, such as chronic wasting disease and

1 bovine tuberculosis; and

2 Whereas, Public support for wolves has historically been high
3 amongst Michigan's Lower Peninsula residents. Survey results from
4 the mid-1990s show that when wolves first began to rebound in the
5 UP, 57 percent of Lower Peninsula residents supported wolf
6 recovery. A more recent DNR report on public meetings held in 2013
7 indicated that the vast majority of meeting participants cared a
8 great deal about wolves. In 2014, over 70 percent of downstate
9 voters voted twice to disallow the North American Model of Wildlife
10 Conservation methods for management of wolves in the UP, which
11 would have allowed the harvesting of a limited number of wolves as
12 a game species to prevent negative impacts from a ballooning
13 population; and

14 Whereas, Legislative committees and offices have been deluged
15 with calls and communications from Lower Peninsula residents
16 regarding the beauty and importance of an unmanaged wolf
17 population. Many have emphasized that they are envious of residents
18 of the UP, as they have the privilege to live side-by-side with
19 wolves. Additionally, these communications frequently admonish UP
20 residents by suggesting that human-wolf conflicts are exaggerated
21 by ignorance and selfishness. Some have even promoted UP residents
22 to move away from their homes to allow wolves to thrive; and

23 Whereas, Re-establishment of gray wolves in the Lower
24 Peninsula could be achieved by translocating wolves from the
25 recovered and established UP wolf population. Translocation has
26 been used for decades as an effective method to re-establish rare
27 and endangered species around the world. Further, witnesses have
28 assured UP residents effective tools to mitigate potential
29 conflicts with wolves, such as cameras, lights, and donkeys, are

1 readily available for purchase by citizens in the Lower Peninsula;
2 now, therefore, be it

3 Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate
4 concurring), That we urge the Department of Natural Resources, in
5 coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the
6 federal government, to re-establish a viable and self-sustaining
7 wolf population in the Lower Peninsula; and be it further

8 Resolved, That this concurrent resolution does not take effect
9 unless House Bill No. 4102 of the 102nd Legislature is enacted into
10 law; and be it further

11 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
12 President of the United States, Secretary of the Interior, Governor
13 of the State of Michigan, Director of the Michigan Department of
14 Natural Resources, and the members of the Michigan Natural
15 Resources Commission and Michigan Wolf Management Advisory Council.