



National Cattlemen's  
Beef Association

# DELISTING GRAY AND MEXICAN WOLVES

## NCBA LEADS WORK TO DELIST WOLVES IN THE LOWER 48 STATES

**For decades, NCBA has led efforts to secure durable federal rules to return wolves to state management. Through repeated extreme activist efforts to govern by judicial edict and failed bureaucratic processes that have delayed delisting, NCBA has remained committed to delisting wolves and restoring ranchers' ability to protect their livestock.**

### GRAY WOLF

Gray wolves have far surpassed recovery goals—now at more than 300% of target levels—after being listed under the Endangered Species Act in 1974. Republican and Democrat administrations alike have acted 5 times in the last 20 years to delist or downlist the wolf. Each time, activist-driven lawsuits have undermined the process and drawn-out litigation for years, ultimately relisting the species. The most recent delisting rule was overturned in 2022.

This court intervention has created uncertainty for stakeholders and allowed populations to grow unchecked while producers face increased livestock depredations. In the continental U.S., gray wolves have 4 different legal statuses that create discrepancies in management abilities.

### Gray Wolf Protection Snapshot

- **Federally Endangered:** CA (also endangered on state list), WI, MI, most of WA (also endangered on state list), most of OR (rest of OR under state management), most of UT
- **Federally Threatened:** MN
- **Delisted:** MT, ID, WY, eastern WA, eastern OR, northcentral UT
- **10(j) Experimental:** CO (nonessential experimental population), also endangered on state list.

### NCBA ACTIONS - GRAY WOLF

**Delisting: NCBA's delisting strategy activates all three branches of government to achieve the fastest delisting that will withstand judicial scrutiny.**

- **Regulation:** NCBA has called on the Trump administration to finalize a new delisting rule that can survive court scrutiny. USFWS has made clear they believe wolves warrant delisting, but have not yet published a rule. Any rule needs to be able to succeed in court when challenged.

- **Legislation:** Two NCBA witnesses have testified in the House in support of federal delisting in 2025 alone – their testimony bolsters calls to delist wolves nationwide, especially when state management restrictions may vary.

### Key Bills:

- **Pet and Livestock Protection Act (H.R. 845)** – Delists the gray wolf from the Endangered Species List – PASSED HOUSE, *now awaiting Senate consideration.*  
**Sponsors:** Reps. Lauren Boebert (CO) & Tom Tiffany (WI)
- **S.1306**, a bill to require delisting of gray wolves in the lower 48 – *Introduced in Senate*  
**Sponsors:** Sens. Ron Johnson (WI), John Barrasso (WY), Mike Lee (UT), Cynthia Lummis (WY)

### Key Testimony:

- NCBA Member Robbie LeValley – PLC Secretary, Colorado rancher
- NCBA Member Kent Clark – WA rancher

**Producer relief:** NCBA secured changes to the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) in the One Big Beautiful Bill, which was signed into law. Indemnity payments will now be 100% of market value for losses, including unborn livestock, due to federally protected predators.

**NCBA secured language in the One Big Beautiful Bull to increase the payments to producers experiencing depredation from federally protected species.**

**Confirmed kills will now be compensated at 100% of the market value of the animal.** While funding is still limited, ranchers should not have to bear the burden of the government's inability to delist the wolves.

- **Litigation:** NCBA leads a coalition lawsuit in the 9th Circuit to delist gray wolves in the lower 48. The lawsuit was in abeyance while USFWS sought to develop a new, durable delisting rule. When the Biden administration failed to finalize a delisting, the litigation became active and is in active briefing status. NCBA will continue this litigation until the Trump administration finalizes a delisting rule that survives activists' legal challenges.

## **MEXICAN WOLF**

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The Mexican wolf has been listed as endangered under the Endangered Species Act since 1976. Managed under a 10(j) "experimental nonessential" status, the listing has been weaponized by activists to control land use, often in defiance of sound science. As wolf numbers climb, producers face mounting cattle losses and limited management options, while rural communities contend with growing public safety risks from wolves encroaching near homes.

### **Mexican wolf**

- **Endangered (Nationwide):** Listed since 1976
- **10(j) Nonessential Experimental Population:** Arizona & New Mexico, Some management flexibility allowed due to 10(j)

### **NCBA ACTIONS - MEXICAN WOLF**

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**Delisting:** Because of the construction of the ESA rule, USFWS is unable to delist the wolf under current requirements, so Congress must act.

- **Legislation:** NCBA has elevated the awareness of the issue across the House Natural Resource Committee and Western Caucus, resulting in introduction and Committee passage of H.R.4255.

### ■ **Key Bills:**

- **Enhancing Safety for Animals Act of 2025 (H.R. 4255)** – Decouples the U.S. and Mexico populations of wolves and delists the wolves in the U.S. – *PASSED HOUSE COMMITTEE, imminent House vote*  
**Sponsor:** Rep Paul Gosar (AZ) and 12 cosponsors

### ■ **Key Testimony:**

- NCBA Member Tom Paterson, NMCGA President

**Producer relief: NCBA secured \$1.5 million in funds in the FY2026 appropriations bill specifically set aside for Mexican wolf depredation payments in AZ and NM.**

While this funding does not cover all losses, additional funds to support payments ensure more ranchers receive compensation until wolves are delisted

### **IN THE MEDIA**

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#### **NCBA Message Reach in the last 60 days:**

- 229 million people with 4.41 million daily views.
- Mentions: NCBA was featured in over 60 news articles.
- NCBA/PLC staff conducted numerous radio, print, and TV interviews, generating more media mentions about this bill than any other organization.

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