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**Title: TWA OPPOSES WOLF HUNTING LEGISLATION**

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**Manitowish Waters, WI** – Over the last two decades, the ecology of the northern Wisconsin landscape has been changing. Wolves, a natural part of our state’s heritage and ecology, are reclaiming their presence in the northland. Now, as that recovery is becoming complete, the Wisconsin legislature is proposing the first hunting season on wolves in over half a century. This proposal has brought strong reactions from a public that holds widely varying views on this predator.

Since these proposals have come to light, many have asked the *Timber Wolf Alliance* (TWA) about our position on the legislation. The mission of TWA is to use education to promote and maintain healthy, ecologically functional wolf populations in the western Great Lakes Region. We have been working for 25 years with state and tribal officials, natural resource agencies, wildlife managers and the public at large in efforts to restore and maintain healthy wolf populations.

TWA views the recovery of Wisconsin’s wolf population as a tremendous ecological success, and an accomplishment to celebrate. TWA also maintains that the healthy population of wolves now found in the state no longer requires the intense protection it once needed. We have supported both the delisting of wolves in the state, and the use of lethal depredation control – stances based on sound science. Since our mission is science-based education rather than advocacy, we neither support nor oppose the public harvest of wolves at this time. However, TWA maintains that any public harvest system must preserve a healthy, ecologically functional wolf population. In addition, any management system incorporating public harvest needs to be grounded in the best science available. These criteria are critical not only for the wolves, but to ensure that the state and tribes maintain their recently gained management authority.

Assembly Bill 502 and its twin, Senate Bill 411 fail in both these criteria, and because of this TWA opposes their passage.

There are a number of questionable management strategies in these bills that go against the best science we have on maintaining healthy wolf populations. The most scientifically questionable points include:

- Restriction of DNR management options regarding the use of zones and closed areas, common practice in many other animal’s hunting seasons;
- A season that begins before pelts are prime, a waste of a natural resources;
- A season that closes too late, interfering with mating season and population monitoring efforts;
- Ability to hunt with dogs; which may increase wolf/dog conflicts and dog depredation payments;
- The introduction of big game night and road hunting, which pose direct human safety concerns; and
- A generalized harvest with little effort to direct harvest towards areas with the greatest wolf depredation problems.

