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Statement Regarding the January 29, 2010 Hearing in Federal District Court in Cheyenne, WY Regarding the Refusal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Delist Wolves in Wyoming Based upon the Wyoming Wolf Management Plan

The Wyoming Wool Growers Association welcomed the hearing today in federal district court which hopefully will lead to the final resolution to this long-standing and convoluted dispute between the citizens of the State of Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service over management of Canadian grey wolves which were foisted on the state by the Clinton administration.

“We are tremendously pleased with the arguments made by Harriett Hageman, the attorney for the Wolf Coalition of which we are a member, as well as the State of Wyoming’s arguments,” said WWGA President Gene Hardy. “It has been our long-held belief that if we could ever get to a complete and full hearing in front of a competent and unbiased federal judge over this debacle that was brought down on the state’s of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana by President Clinton and Interior Secretary Babbitt, that the obvious and only outcome would be for the federal courts to order the USFWS to delist wolves in Wyoming and turn them over to management by the state based upon the plan already approved by the USFWS. We think that case was made convincingly and unarguably today.”

Several key points were brought out over the many months of filings, pleadings and finally hearings by Ms. Hageman, the Wolf Coalitions attorney. Among these are:

- The concessions by the federal government that the vast majority of the representations that they have made to date related to the Canadian gray wolf population (including, among others, management and control assurances, geographic restrictions, biological needs, stated recovery goals, the importance and purpose of the peer reviews, travel corridors, genetic connectivity, a promise to “delist,” and a commitment to turn over management to Wyoming) were made for one purpose, and one purpose only – to say and do whatever was necessary to fulfill their objective of forcing Wyoming and its citizens to protect wolves (and provide

the necessary prey base) throughout the entire State regardless of whether “recovery” (however defined) was assured and secured in a smaller geographic area.

- The confirmation by the federal government that wolf numbers mean nothing, recovery goals are irrelevant and subject to change, and public perception and politics are the new “scientific” gold standard by which listing and delisting decisions under the Endangered Species Act will be made.
- That Wyoming’s Plan clearly meets the requirements of the Endangered Species Act for delisting of species by convincing evidence that Wyoming’s Plan passes biological/scientific muster by providing the necessary regulatory framework for protecting this particular non-essential experimental wolf population at or above recovery level and that the Obama Administration utterly failed to support its arguments otherwise, instead showing that their efforts are clearly focused on confusion and deflection rather than on addressing the question at hand.

As Ms. Hageman points out, “the State of Wyoming is faced with the difficult task of balancing its mandate to protect and preserve a recovered gray wolf population with its duty of protecting and preserving the prey upon which the wolves feed. Wyoming must consider the impact that wolves have on private property rights, particularly livestock. Wyoming must consider the impact that wolves have on other wildlife, particularly the elk and moose populations. After balancing the various public interests, the State of Wyoming developed and adopted a Management Plan that was properly tailored and based on sound science.

The Federal Respondents’ rejection of the Wyoming Plan and statutory scheme is arbitrary, capricious, and otherwise not in accordance with law. It should not be allowed to stand.”