



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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JOE KOLMAN, Legislative Environmental Analyst

May 5, 2016

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2016-0042

To whom it may concern,

The Environmental Quality Council (EQC) is a bipartisan committee of the Montana Legislature. At its meeting May 5 in Helena, the EQC voted 11 to 5 to support the removal of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population of grizzly bears from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife as well as the delisting of the grizzly bear for the entire state of Montana.

In January of this year, Matt Hogan, the Deputy Regional Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Mountain-Prairie Region, explained the Yellowstone proposal to the council. Jeff Hagener, the director of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks explained the role the agency would have in the management of the grizzly bear in Montana.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, (USFWS) the number of grizzly bears increased almost sevenfold from the estimated 136 bears present at the time of the 1975 listing. The range inhabited by the bear has doubled in that time to more than 22,500 square miles. The USFWS concluded the area has reached its carrying capacity for grizzly bears.

The Environmental Quality Council supports state management of the grizzly bear. The lead agency for Montana will be the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. The council exercises its administrative oversight of the department regularly.

The council finds that the Yellowstone grizzly bear population no longer needs the protection of the Endangered Species Act. The council also urges the delisting of the grizzly bear for the entire state of Montana. A roll call sheet showing the council vote is attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gene Vuckovich".

Sen. Gene Vuckovich, Chairman

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

ROLL CALL VOTE

Date: May 5, 2016

Name	Aye	Nay
Rep. Gerald Bennett	✓	
Rep. Willis Curdy		✓
Rep. Janet Ellis		✓
Rep. Ed Lieser		✓
Rep. Theresa Manzella	✓	
Rep. Kerry White	✓	
Sen. John Brenden	✓	
Sen. Jim Keane	✓	
Sen. Mike Phillips		✓
Sen. Rick Ripley	✓	
Sen. Cary Smith	✓	
Mr. Scott Aspenlieder P	✓	
Ms. Brooke Erb	✓	
Mr. Bert Lindler		✓
Mr. Roy Morris P	✓	
Sen. Gene Vuckovich	✓	
16 members		

Motion:

5

Send letter to U.S. Fish Wildlife Service
Secretary of Interior, Idaho, Wyoming
Support delisting of greater yellow stone grizzly

P = Proxy