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April 17, 2017

Senator Steve Daines  
United States Senate  
30 West 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 206  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Senator Daines:

I write on behalf of the membership of the Montana Wool Growers Association, which represents Montana's sheep and wool producers.

I write to alert you to a resolution enacted by the 2017 Montana Legislature. We discussed this resolution with your office during our visit to Washington D.C. in late March.

This resolution, numbered HJ 15, expresses the will of the people of Montana that you and Senator Tester jointly introduce and pass federal legislation that delists from the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) Montana's grizzly bear population. A copy of the resolution, which was passed with bipartisan support, is enclosed for your review.

This resolution was brought to the Montana Legislature at the request of the Montana Wool Growers Association. As you know from being involved with agriculture production, losses from predator species kills, such as bear kills, constitute the second highest cause of economic loss for Montana's sheep producers, trailing only natural death loss.

As evidenced by the growing amount of compensation being paid out by Montana's Livestock Loss Board to producers for confirmed grizzly bear kills, Montana's grizzly bear population is both healthy and expanding. Under any measure, the Yellowstone area grizzly bear population satisfied ESA recovery goals a decade ago. Yet, the bear is still managed under the severe restrictions imposed by the ESA due to federal judges prohibiting management of the bear from being turned over to the State of Montana. Further, the Northern Continental Divide Grizzly Bear population has also reached recovery goals. However, like the Yellowstone area grizzly population, delisting of the Northern Continental Divide Grizzly population appears to be nowhere near coming to fruition thanks to self-styled environmental groups and timid federal bureaucrats.

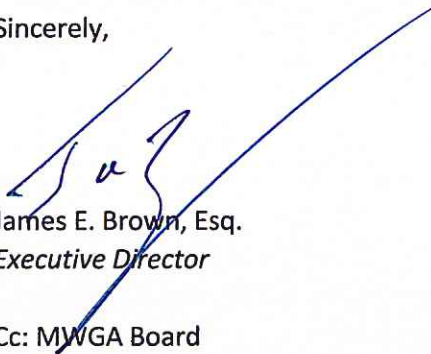
Montana's sheep industry has supported delisting this species for more than 10 years. And, as set forth in the express language of HJ 15, the Montana Legislature has now expressed its will that Montana's grizzly bear population be returned to state management. Further, knowing that any effort to delist the bill will immediately be met with a federal lawsuit, the Legislature has directed that you, as part of any legislation introduced, exempt any and all grizzly bear delisting efforts from judicial review.

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The fact of the matter is that social tolerance for Montana's grizzly bear population is decreasing with each year that the bear remains under federal management. As such, we urge you to address this issue head on and to introduce federal legislation this session to accomplish what the Legislature has requested you do, which is to ensure that Montana assumes management of its grizzly bear population, such as it now successfully manages its gray wolf population.

Thank you for your time and attention to this missive and the request for action contained herein. Should you have any questions about the enclosed resolution, its content, its intent, its importance or should you need background on why the Association requested the resolution be adopted by the Montana Legislature, please feel free to contact me. In the meantime, I look forward to hearing a positive written response from you as to what actions you will take to return the management of the grizzly bear to the people of Montana.

Sincerely,



James E. Brown, Esq.  
*Executive Director*

Cc: MWGA Board

Encl: (1)