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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 4551

03/04/2024 Authored by Grossell, Bliss, Burkel, Perryman, Skraba and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to game and fish; requiring an open season for wolves; prohibiting
1.3 government agents from engaging in federal wolf law enforcement; requiring a
1.4 report; amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 97B.645, subdivision 9;
1.5 proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 97B.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 97B.645, subdivision 9, is amended to read:

1.8 Subd. 9. Open season. ~~There shall be no~~ (a) The commissioner must prescribe an annual
1.9 open season for wolves until after unless the wolf is delisted listed under the federal
1.10 Endangered Species Act of 1973. After that time, the commissioner may prescribe open
1.11 seasons and restrictions for taking wolves but must provide opportunity for public comment.
1.12 The season, restrictions, and any other requirements must be consistent with the goals
1.13 identified in the wolf management plan adopted under section 97B.646.

1.14 (b) The commissioner must annually consult with the commissioner of agriculture and
1.15 the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
1.16 before determining the season, restrictions, and other requirements of the open season
1.17 required under this section. The consultation must include a review of available data on
1.18 wolf depredation on livestock and pets and other incidents of human conflict.

1.19 Sec. 2. [97B.649] FEDERAL WOLF LAW ENFORCEMENT PROHIBITED.

1.20 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) As used in this section, the following terms have the
1.21 meanings given.

2.1 (b) "Government agent" means an agent or employee of the Department of Natural
2.2 Resources, the state of Minnesota, or a local unit of government of the state of Minnesota.

2.3 (c) "Wolf law enforcement" means all efforts to investigate, arrest, enforce, or assist in
2.4 an investigation, arrest, or enforcement under federal laws prohibiting the hunting of wolves.

2.5 Subd. 2. **Prohibited actions.** Except to the extent required by federal law, a government
2.6 agent must not:

2.7 (1) stop, question, investigate, search, detain, detect, report, prosecute, or arrest a person
2.8 for wolf law enforcement purposes;

2.9 (2) use money, facilities, property, equipment, or personnel of the state or of a local unit
2.10 of government for wolf law enforcement purposes;

2.11 (3) support or assist federal wolf law enforcement operations in any way; or

2.12 (4) enter into or renew any cooperative agreements under United States Code, title 16,
2.13 section 1535, with the United States related to wolves.

2.14 Sec. 3. **WITHDRAWAL FROM COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS RELATED TO**
2.15 **WOLF LAW ENFORCEMENT.**

2.16 The governor, or other appropriate state official, must immediately take all necessary
2.17 steps to withdraw the state from any cooperative agreement under United States Code, title
2.18 16, section 1535, or any other statute or rule, that requires government agents to engage in
2.19 actions prohibited by Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.649.

2.20 Sec. 4. **REPORT; IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT.**

2.21 By January 1, 2025, the commissioner of natural resources must report to the chairs and
2.22 ranking minority members of the legislative committees and divisions with jurisdiction over
2.23 environment and natural resources policy on the implementation of this act. The report must
2.24 include an explanation of steps taken under section 2 and must identify any legal impediments
2.25 to implementing Minnesota Statutes, section 97B.649.