



ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

PO BOX 201704
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1704
(406) 444-3742

GOVERNOR STEVE BULLOCK
DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVE
TIM BAKER

HOUSE MEMBERS
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WILLIS CURDY
JANET ELLIS
ED LIESER
THERESA MANZELLA
KERRY WHITE

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BERT LINDLER
ROY MORRIS

COUNCIL STAFF
JASON MOHR, Research Analyst
SONJA NOWAKOWSKI, Research Analyst
HOPE STOCKWELL, Research Analyst
HELEN THIGPEN, Staff Attorney
NADINE SPENCER, Secretary
JOE KOLMAN, Legislative Environmental Analyst

May 5, 2016

Secretary Sally Jewell
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Jewell,

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,

Sen. Gene Vuckovich, Chairman



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Idaho Fish and Game
Virgil Moore, Director
P.O. Box 25
Boise, ID 83707

Director Moore,

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May 5, 2016

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

To whom it may concern,

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Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Scott Talbott, Director
5400 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82006

Director Talbott,

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Sincerely,

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:

Send letter to U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 5
Secretary of Interior, Idaho, Wyoming
Support delisting of greater yellow stone grizzly

P = Proxy