

Last week I joined several members of Congress in introducing H.R. 6486, legislation to remove the gray wolf from the endangered species list. The federal government has thus far failed to do so administratively despite startling growth in the wolf population. While the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is famously known for listing species deemed threatened or endangered, the law also very clearly requires species to be *delisted* once their recovery goals have been met. After being listed, wolves were reintroduced in Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming in 1995. The recovery targets for wolf populations were easily met in those three states by 2002, allowing for them to be removed from the endangered species list and ending the very costly property use restrictions that accompany any species listing. However, eight years of litigation from national environmental organizations have prevented the delisting and kept the gray wolf under federal control even as their population continued to rise. As a result, wolf populations have reached nearly *seven times* the recovery target and are causing major damage to domestic livestock and wildlife.

In addition to their vigorous opposition to returning wolf management to state wildlife agencies, national environmental groups are even going so far as to advocate for the introduction of wolves into Northern California, including in our Congressional District, and throughout the western and northeastern United States. The Center for Biological Diversity, one of the most litigious groups, included the below map depicting their “national recovery plan” for the gray wolf described in its recent [newsletter](#). For these reasons, I strongly support my colleagues’ effort to hold the federal government accountable for its responsibility to delist the gray wolf and other recovered species under the ESA.



*While the ESA was well-intentioned, it has been used for nearly 40 years to infringe upon private property rights and multiple-use of our federal lands, derail the construction and operation of critical and much-needed infrastructure, and even threaten public health and safety. This all-out effort to oppose the delisting of the gray wolf represents a perfect example of how the ESA is used not to recover species so much as it is used as a tool for groups to drive an agenda of locking-up federal lands and restricting the use and development of private property. Northern Californians are unfortunately all too familiar with the impacts of an inflexible ESA; for example, the decimation of our once vibrant timber industry caused by the infamous listing of the spotted owl, and the tragic loss of three lives resulting from a breach in the Arboga Levee in Yuba County after years-long delays in necessary improvements due to the presence of habitat for the protected Valley Longhorn Elderberry Beetle.*