



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

1255 23rd Street, NW
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037

P 202-452-1100
F 202-778-6132

humanesociety.org

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

RE: SF 4062, A-6 Delete Everything Amendment

Chair Ingebrigtsen and Senate Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony regarding the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance omnibus bill, SF 4062, A-6 DE Amendment, on behalf of the members and supporters of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) in Minnesota. The HSUS is a nonprofit organization working for the protection of all animals for more than 60 years.

We have concerns with two sections of the bill, outlined below, and submit these comments to urge these sections be removed.

Article 2, Section 25: Lines 26.5-26.18 requires the DNR to issue permits for wildlife control operators to take nuisance bear by live tracking and relocation. While on its face, relocating nuisance bears may appear to be a humane approach, the language presents concerns largely because relocation does not resolve the underlying problem and it may cause problems elsewhere.

- Relocating bears can cause three issues:
 - 1) It may not resolve the initial issue because if the attractant hasn't been removed, another bear may come in;
 - 2) Relocating a nuisance bear may move the problem to a new area (same behavior, now in a new area);
 - 3) Relocated bears may be killed if they're put into territory where there are existing bears.
- The DNR stopped relocating bears in 2000 and focuses on education for homeowners.
- The response to human-bear conflicts should be comprehensive and primarily focused on actions that identify and remove access to attractants that are at the root cause of human bear conflicts. When bears are involved in conflict situations hazing and aversive conditioning techniques should be applied to those animals. Relocation should not be the primary solution to addressing conflicts with bears, it should be applied when it is the only non-lethal option remaining and according to specific-age and scenario criteria.

Article 2, Section 26: Lines 26.19-26.24 requires DNR to prescribe an annual open season on wolves once they are delisted under the federal Endangered Species Act. This section is of particular concern, as it is not based on sound science, humane ethics, or Minnesota values

The DNR is [in the process of updating](#) the state's 20-year-old Wolf Management Plan through a public process with the input of diverse stakeholder groups, a



technical working group, consultation with tribal nations, and input from the general public. It is crucial this public process guides wolf policy in our state.

Wolf trophy hunting and trapping goes against sound science and societal values. Scientific research demonstrates that such seasons cause a [cascade of harms](#) resulting in death and disruption beyond the individual killed. Killing a single adult wolf can result in the loss of an *entire pack*, causing the [loss of dependent offspring](#) and disrupting the pack's social structure. Studies have shown that allowing wolf trophy hunting and trapping can [increase wolf poaching](#) as well.

Numerous studies also demonstrate that wolves keep deer and moose herds healthy and can help mitigate the spread of deadly diseases, including chronic wasting disease. A [2017 DNR study](#) found that at least 40% of the moose killed by wolves in Minnesota had other serious health issues that may have predisposed them to predation.

As demonstrated by a [2019 survey](#) conducted by the DNR in partnership with the University of Minnesota, Minnesotans value wolves. That survey found that not only do more than two-thirds of state residents have a positive attitude toward wolves, but 86% said they would like to see the same number or more in Minnesota. ***More residents oppose a wolf hunting season than support it, and a majority of residents oppose a wolf trapping season.*** As such, circumventing the DNR's public process and mandating a hunt will only undermine the trust of Minnesotans in the state's ability to serve as a steward of its wildlife in a scientific, ethical, and transparent way.

Finally, baseless myths do not justify wolf trophy hunting and trapping. For example, conflicts between livestock and wolves are [already rare](#) in Minnesota and science shows that killing wolves [will not solve](#) the few conflicts that do occur. In 2019, just 1.4% of the 5,150 Minnesota beef cattle farms in occupied wolf territory experienced conflicts with wolves. The best remedies for [preventing conflicts](#) are non-lethal deterrents such as guardian animals, sanitary carcass removal, and flagged fencing known as "fladry."

It is crucial that this legislature does not mandate a hunt that is not supported by science or the majority of Minnesotans. For the reasons stated above, we urge your opposition to legislative provisions mandating a wolf hunting and trapping season.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share our concerns. I am happy to discuss either of the above sections with you anytime as you complete your work this session.

Sincerely,

Christine Coughlin
Minnesota State Director
Humane Society of the United States
ccoughlin@humanesociety.org