

My name is Cindy Benson I'm from Bagley located in Clearwater County, MN. I wish I could stand before you but currently we are in the midst of our calving season.

The wolf predation has been an economic loss and an emotional hardship for our family ranch for the last 15-20 years. We not only feel the economic loss with dead calves, lower pregnancy rates and lower weaning weights but we also have grazing land we cannot use because of the wolf infestation. When our cows become stressed my family becomes endangered, my grandsons can no longer get out of the tractor to help for fear of being mauled by a cow. We have lost calves due to the mothers stepping on them trying to protect their babies from the wolves and there is no government reimbursements for those losses. In 2023 we lost 10 calves in 1 pasture and were only able to confirm 1 wolf kill, thank God for the federal trappers who came in and took 7 wolves in that one pasture, but we were paid for 1 calf. In 2024 after a confirmed kill federal trappers were unsuccessful so the problem continues to grow. We are now into the second week of calving and have had 1 confirmed wolf kill and a second from just this morning waiting to be confirmed. Most bodies are never recovered so to have found 2 makes me wonder how more may we have lost in this short time. Last calving season we had thermal imaging of 2 wolves working our calving pasture, I watched as a baby calf kept trying to approach the wolves out of curiosity while the mother desperately tried to keep herself between her baby and those wolves. It made me sick as I watched the video not knowing but expecting a horrible outcome, fortunately we were able to disrupt the situation.

Federal trappers have been our only recourse and we are thankful for them but there is so much wolf predation that they cannot handle all the cases. Our cow herd is our life, it is how we make our living. I feel the same about my girls (cows) as you probably do about your house pet. We need to be able to protect these mothers and their babies. How would you feel if you walked out into your yard and found your beloved pet ripped into pieces, it is no different for us.

We need to have a managed hunting season on these predators so I support SF2720.

Cindy Benson

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