

Dear Governors Hobbs, Lujan Grisham, and Polis,

I am writing to ask that you rescind your state's support for the arbitrary Interstate 40 boundary that is hindering Mexican wolf recovery.

In 2015, the Four Corners states' acting governors wrote to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service opposing Mexican wolf recovery north of Interstate 40. This position was problematic at the time, and it remains anti-scientific and antithetical to the letter and spirit of the Endangered Species Act. Unfortunately, it also remains at the forefront of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's unwillingness to explore northern recovery areas for the lobo.

The need for recovery of Mexican wolves north of Interstate 40 is supported by scientific literature and aligns with the goals of the Endangered Species Act. The current climate crisis underscores the need for expanded northward and elevational habitat ranges for imperiled species, allowing for spatial adaptation to changing landscape conditions.

Wolves are already moving north, following their natural dispersal instincts to seek new territories and unrelated potential mates. Numerous Mexican wolves have roamed northward in recent years only to be captured and relocated at the taxpayers' expense.

The Endangered Species Act is supposed to recover species using the best available science, and the Interstate 40 boundary is an arbitrary political boundary, not in any way a biological or ecological one.

Additionally, since the 2015 letter was sent, Colorado chose to reintroduce northern gray wolves to the state, and has so far declined to consider introducing Mexican gray wolves. The science shows that a zone of intergradation between Mexican wolves and gray wolves historically occurred in the Southern Rockies. Occasional interbreeding of wolf subspecies in Colorado would benefit the existing Mexican wolf population in southwestern New Mexico and southeastern Arizona, which would be connected through long-distance dispersing wolves. The benefit would come in the form of diversifying the impoverished gene pool of the current Mexican wolf population.

Conversely, if Mexican wolves are not present in the San Juan Mountains, this region will be inhabited by reintroduced northern gray wolves, some of whom would similarly disperse and reach the current Mexican wolf population. The difference in scenarios is that, if Mexican wolves inhabit the San Juans, the center of subspecies intergradation would occur in west-central Colorado and not in central or southern New Mexico and Arizona.

Were northern wolves to inhabit the San Juans, there is a risk of northern wolf genes swamping the gene pool of the Mexican wolf where it exists in the wild in the Southwest today.

It is my hope that Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado can support true Mexican wolf recovery and withdraw from the 2015 four-state letter.

Sincerely,

[First Name][Last Name]