



VOTE NO! ON PROPOSALS 1 & 2

Keep Michigan Wolves Protected Declares Victory for Wolves and Voter Rights

LANSING, Mich. – With about 50 percent of votes reported statewide and strong margins on both measures, Keep Michigan Wolves Protected has declared victory in defeating Proposals 1 and 2 in the November 4 election.

Jill Fritz, director of Keep Michigan Wolves Protected and Michigan senior state director for The Humane Society of the United States, said: “The citizens of Michigan have voted by wide margins to reject both laws enacted by the legislature, not only rejecting wolf hunting but also the attempt to transfer authority to the Natural Resources Commission to declare hunting seasons on protected species.”

The legislature passed a third law in August that is a duplicate of Proposal 2, and Keep Michigan Wolves Protected says the voters’ verdict has implications for future action on wolves.

“The resounding rejection of Proposal 2 is an unmistakable signal to the NRC to terminate any plans in 2015 for a wolf hunt,” added Fritz. “The public does not accept its authority to make such a declaration. It’s now time for lawmakers and the NRC to heed the will of the people. The people of Michigan don’t want the trophy hunting of wolves, they don’t want more legislative tricks, and they don’t want to cede authority to an unelected group of political appointees. The NRC should honor the judgment rendered by voters come 2015, regardless of the outcome of the lawsuit to nullify the third wolf-hunting bill enacted by the legislature.”

Background:

- While the legislature passed yet a third law in August to duplicate Proposal 2, and included an unrelated appropriation to block a referendum, Keep Michigan Wolves Protected plans to challenge this law in court as unconstitutional. If a court strikes down that law, the defeat of Proposals 1 and 2 will confirm the non-game status of wolves and will return the power to designate game species to the legislature so citizens can maintain a check and balance on its future actions. Existing laws allowing the effective management of problem wolves will not be affected.
- This is the latest in a series of battles over wolves and wildlife policy, and the issue won’t be settled for a long time. Besides the expected litigation over the unconstitutional law passed in August, there is also pending litigation to restore federal Endangered Species Act protections to the Great Lakes wolf population, which would affect the ability of Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin to authorize wolf hunting and trapping seasons.
- In the last two years, more than 2,200 wolves have been killed across Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Wisconsin and Wyoming for sport – many of them with painful steel-jawed leghold traps and chased to death by packs of hounds.
- This was the first statewide vote on wolf hunting in any state since wolves were stripped of their federal protections. Decision makers across the Great Lakes and Northern Rockies should pay attention to this vote in Michigan, and see how regular citizens feel about the trophy hunting and trapping of wolves.
- Proposal 1 would have established a trophy hunting and trapping season on wolves in Michigan. Proposal 2 would have granted the state’s Natural Resources Commission the authority to designate wolves and other animals as game species to be hunted and trapped, without oversight by legislators or voters. Proposal 2 was passed by the legislature for the sole reason of circumventing a citizen vote on Proposal 1.
- The two proposals were placed on the ballot by Keep Michigan Wolves Protected, a coalition of conservation groups, animal welfare organizations, Native American tribes, wildlife biologists, faith groups, veterinarians, hunters, farmers and concerned Michigan residents.

Keep Michigan Wolves Protected is grateful for the tireless dedication of hundreds of volunteers who collected nearly 500,000 signatures in two petition drives, often in brutally cold weather, to place Proposals 1 and 2 on the ballot. It is the people of Michigan, from Marquette to Traverse City to Kalamazoo to Detroit, who achieved this victory for their wolves.