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Comment from Hopkins, Becca

Posted by the **Fish and Wildlife Service** on May 13, 2026

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Comment

RE: FWS—HQ—ES—2025—1464 (OMB Control Number 1018-0197, Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, Experimental Populations—Colorado Gray Wolf, 50 CFR 17.84)

I am a rancher manager in the Piceance Creek Basin of Northwestern Colorado. We run about 150 pairs of beef cattle and I've been in the ranching industry since 2014. Gray wolf management matters to me because I livd and work in a beautiful part of rural Colorado with an abundance of wildlife. I'd like it to keep its diversity of species, and controlling the population growth of an apex predator is a crucial part of that goal.

Some impacts to my community that I have personally observed is, first of all, the fear and anxiety it has caused for local producers and their families. Secondly, the amount of responsibility that has been placed on the ranchers to mitigate the impact of the wolves on our range. It's honestly overwhelming the additional expectations on us to attempt to keep our stock safe from depredation. Site assents, range riders, electric fence, CPW information clinics, and guard dogs are all additional possible tasks and expenses to an already full schedule and limited budget. As a ranch manager I work everyday, sometimes well into the dark. I know others feel the same. That if we don't do all the things they tell us we won't get paid for depredations when it does happen. But we are already functioning max capacity.

In regards to the 10j rule, I'm so thankful it is a part of this wolf introduction. This range is huge; with vast acres of brush, aspen groves, piñon juniper, and sage. Finding depredations in a timely manner and getting it investigated so you can prove a wolf was the culprit is difficult. I'm grateful for my local CPW officers who keep us informed if a collared wolf has been in the general area recently. So I know to be extra vigilant for any missing livestock. But it's still big country for animals to disappear. Also what happens when we get a bunch of uncollared wolves running around?

All that said please keep in mind ranching families are essential stewards of western rangelands. Any wolf management framework should balance species conservation with ranchers' ability to continue operating viable livestock businesses.

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