

House Engrossed

federal nullification; Mexican wolf; reintroduction

State of Arizona  
House of Representatives  
Fifty-seventh Legislature  
Second Regular Session  
2026

# HOUSE BILL 2787

AN ACT

AMENDING TITLE 1, CHAPTER 2, ARTICLE 4, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES, BY  
ADDING SECTION 1-273; RELATING TO SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Title 1, chapter 2, article 4, Arizona Revised Statutes,  
3 is amended by adding section 1-273, to read:

4 1-273. Sovereign authority; Mexican wolf reintroduction;  
5 exception

6 A. PURSUANT TO ARTICLE II, SECTION 3, CONSTITUTION OF ARIZONA, THIS  
7 STATE, ANY AGENCY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THIS STATE AND ANY EMPLOYEE  
8 OF THIS STATE OR AN AGENCY OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISION OF THIS STATE ACTING  
9 IN THE EMPLOYEE'S OFFICIAL CAPACITY MAY NOT USE ANY PERSONNEL OR FINANCIAL  
10 RESOURCES TO ENFORCE, ADMINISTER OR COOPERATE WITH THE MEXICAN WOLF  
11 REINTRODUCTION PROGRAM PURSUANT TO THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973  
12 (P.L. 93-205; 87 STAT. 884; 16 UNITED STATES CODE SECTIONS 1531 THROUGH  
13 1544).

14 B. THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE LIVESTOCK LOSS PROGRAM THAT  
15 IS ADMINISTERED AND ENFORCED BY THE LIVESTOCK LOSS BOARD ESTABLISHED BY  
16 SECTION 17-491.

17 Sec. 2. Legislative findings

18 The legislature finds that:

19 1. In 1998, the United States fish and wildlife service initiated  
20 the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project and began introducing captively  
21 bred Mexican wolves into Arizona and New Mexico. Pursuant to the  
22 Endangered Species Act, the United States fish and wildlife service  
23 determined that the release of Mexican wolves in the United States was for  
24 purely experimental purposes and that one hundred percent of the Mexican  
25 wolves currently located in the United States are not essential to the  
26 continued survival of the species.

27 2. In 2014, the population of Mexican wolves in the United States  
28 met and exceeded the United States fish and wildlife service's original  
29 goal of 100 wolves, yet the Mexican wolf was not delisted from the  
30 endangered species list, prolonging uncertainty for local communities and  
31 perpetuating greater legal protections for wolves than private property  
32 rights.

33 3. By the end of 2024, there were 286 Mexican wolves in the wild in  
34 the United States and another 356 Mexican wolves in captivity, marking an  
35 11 percent increase in wild Mexican wolves in the United States over  
36 year-end 2023 and the ninth consecutive year of growth.

37 4. The Mexican wolf is a vicious predator that requires large  
38 populations of natural ungulate prey such as deer and elk to sustain its  
39 diet. Southeast Arizona does not include a large population of natural  
40 ungulate prey, demonstrating that, without cattle, the Mexican wolf  
41 population would not have been able to reach 286 wolves. The increasing  
42 reliance on livestock and expanding encroachment of Mexican wolves into  
43 southeast Arizona has resulted in violent attacks in local communities and  
44 concerning incidents near residential homes, including incidents involving

1 pets and children, which threaten rural families and have forced some  
2 communities to install caged bus stops for children.

3 5. One Mexican wolf can cause between \$69,000 and \$162,000 in  
4 direct and indirect losses to a local rancher, with total indirect losses  
5 ranging from \$1.4 million to \$3.4 million, creating significant economic  
6 damage to local communities and substantial financial devastation to  
7 ranching families but the losses are unverified due to burdensome federal  
8 procedures that fail to recognize all forms of livestock loss and Mexican  
9 wolf predation.

10 6. Over \$220 million has been spent on the Mexican wolf  
11 reintroduction project in the United States to-date, representing  
12 approximately \$500,000 to \$1 million per Mexican wolf, despite 90 percent  
13 of the species' historical range lying in Mexico, while local governments  
14 like Cochise county have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to protect  
15 their citizens against the Mexican wolf.

16 7. The projected cost to American taxpayers of maintaining the  
17 Mexican wolf reintroduction project through 2030 is estimated to be  
18 between \$47 million and \$59 million, not including compensation funds or  
19 administrative overhead, and is not justified when the original population  
20 goal of 100 wolves was met and exceeded in 2014.

21 8. Based on the best scientific and commercial data available,  
22 including the current population count, the maximum population that likely  
23 could have been sustained by historical non-livestock sources of prey  
24 alone, and the lack of overt government predator control programs that  
25 seek to extirpate the Mexican wolf once it is delisted, the Mexican wolf  
26 in the United States has met and far exceeded the minimum population  
27 necessary for delisting, has sufficiently recovered, is no longer at risk  
28 of extinction in its historical range and is no longer in need of the  
29 protections afforded by the Endangered Species Act.