

REFERENCE TITLE: federal nullification; Mexican wolf; reintroduction

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

HB 2787

Introduced by
Representative Diaz

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.