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## **Alberta Government has Lost Control of Wolf Management**

Decisions on Alberta's wolf population are being made by local authorities with public funds and hunting groups with funding from foreign special interest groups, and the Alberta government seems unwilling, or unable, to do anything to intervene. Details revealed in a recent Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) application made by Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) point to outdated and inappropriate wildlife policy and legislation in Alberta.

"This isn't a question of whether or not wolves should be controlled," says Carolyn Campbell, AWA conservation specialist. "It's a question of who gets to decide what wolf numbers should be. Why should that be decided by incentive funding from foreign hunting groups, with no input from the Alberta public?"

FOIP documents reveal that a number of local authorities, including the MDs of Clearhill, Big Lakes and Bonnyville offer bounties, or "incentives" for people to kill wolves. Local hunting groups in areas including Sundre, Rocky Mountain House and Drayton Valley also offer bounties. Some even offer bounties to kill wolf cubs.

According to the FOIP documents, funding for some of these programs comes from the Wyoming-based Wild Sheep Foundation. One briefing from civil servants states "The wolf incentive program... is funded primarily by the Wild Sheep Foundation, which distributes funding to the local chapters of the Alberta Trappers' Association and the Alberta Fish and Game Association. The local clubs distribute the funds as they see fit..."

"Ironically, government Fish and Wildlife staff are fully aware that there is no evidence that untargeted wolf bounties do anything to reduce livestock predation," says Campbell. "There are much more effective ways to deal with wolf predation than just killing random wolves."

In the FOIP documents, government Fish and Wildlife staff point out that "it is possible for wolves to coexist with livestock without causing many problems and when this occurs it is important to maintain that pack in the area rather than kill it off, which creates a vacant territory for a pack which may kill livestock."

AWA is calling on Diana McQueen, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, to take back provincial control of wolf management. Wolves must be managed on behalf of all Albertans, not just special interest groups.

**For more information:**

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