LANSING—Gov. Rick Snyder has signed legislation that would allow for the establishment of a hunting season for wolves in Michigan and provide fair indemnification payments for livestock killed by wolves, coyotes and cougars. __PUBLIC__

Sen. Tom Casperson, R-Escanaba, sponsored Senate Bill 1350 (Public Act 520 of 2012). The measure designates wolves as a game animal and authorizes the Natural Resources Commission to establish a game season. SB 996 (PA 487 of 2012), also sponsored by Casperson, would build upon provisions in current law to ensure livestock owners receive fair and timely compensation for animals killed by wolves, coyotes or cougars. In recent years, farmers have expressed frustration with the growing number of livestock they lose to wolves and the delay in compensation received from the state.

The hunt can legally be considered because wolves were removed from the endangered species list for the Great Lakes region at the beginning of the year. The move places wolf management under jurisdiction of the state of Michigan. Other states, including Wisconsin and Minnesota, have already established game seasons for wolves with their hunts occurring this fall.

“With wolf numbers far exceeding population goals, I continue to hear concerns of the impacts they are having on people’s lives and businesses,” Casperson said. “Residents across the Upper Peninsula have repeatedly asked for a game season to help control the wolf population, reduce livestock and pet depredation and enhance public safety.

“The DNR now agrees that a game season is needed as part of the approach to manage wolves.”