Honorable (Full Name)
Minnesota State Senate
(Room #) Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606

Dear Sen. (Last Name):

I’m writing to you today about MN Senate Bill SF 2359 and MN House Bill HF 2308. This legislation has been stalled for almost 8 years and we are ready for that to change.

Here is that these bills **are** asking for.

* We need to get lethal, body-grip traps and snares at least 5 feet above ground, or in dog-proof boxes, or completely submerged in water.
* We ask that there be significant penalties and more enforcement for trappers who violate the regulations.
* We ask for better reporting for when dogs are killed by the traps.

That’s it. That’s all that’s being asked.

Many loved and valuable dogs are being killed each year because of inadequate trapping laws and there are many misconceptions about what these bills are asking for.

* The bills **are not** asking for the trapping industry to end.
* The bills **are not** asking for an increase in fees to trapping licenses.
* These bills **have no relationship** to PETA or Humane Society agendas.

Thousands of responsible trappers in Minnesota and other states have proven that they can effectively use body grip traps without killing dogs. Many states, including Wisconsin, require these methods. Wisconsin requires body grip traps to be checked daily, even if they are elevated, to prevent poorly caught animals from suffering in the trap for so long.

It's only a small minority of MN trappers who are causing this problem, but they won't improve until the law is changed.

We think passing these bills will have the following effects:

* There will be in increase in hunting and trapping licensed purchased. License numbers have been on the decline as many hunters are afraid to take their dogs into the woods and fields because of the traps.
* There will be in increase in small business revenue, as trappers and hunters typically frequent the small cafes, bait shops, and other local businesses for their supplies.
* There will be in increase in hunting and trapping educational courses, as more youth will be encouraged to hunt with their families.

As your constituent, I'm asking you to vote for the commonsense trapping regulations outlined in MN Senate bill SF 2359 and MN House bill HF 2308 to protect our dogs from lethal body grip traps and snares. It is not necessary to kill dogs in order to trap but current regulations are responsible for killing more than 80 dogs. Many go unreported as “lost dogs.” **Voluntary compliance to commonsense usage of body grip traps is not protecting our dogs.**

I encourage you to visit the website [www.doglovers4safetrappingmn.org](http://www.doglovers4safetrappingmn.org) to view stories, videos, and pictures of the dogs that have been injured and killed by these traps. The site also has maps that have been painstakingly created to show how widespread the issue is and how many dogs have been killed. The sad part of these maps is that so many deaths are unreported, so what you are seeing is just a fraction of what is actually happening. Few trappers will report killing a dog unless it is required by the state.

**[Insert personal story here or delete this line and use the story below. If using a personal story, feel free to delete this line and the paragraph below.]**

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A dog was killed near Pequot Lakes on opening day of bobcat season. She had just given birth to a litter of 8 puppies 2 weeks before. She was killed by a body grip trap, baited with meat, and set on the ground near her home. The trap that killed her was 1 inch from being a legal set but no one believes that last inch would have protected her. Her picture is below. The same trapper returned to the area and set more traps after being ticketed. His fine was $100 for setting an illegal trap. He wasn't ticketed for killing this family's dog because it's not illegal to kill someone's dog in a body grip trap. SF 2359 and HF 2308 would add penalties for killing a dog in a body grip trap set.

​Dogs play an important role in our families, and the risk of losing them in body grip traps or lethal snares is preventing us from enjoying the outdoors. Hunters have stopped hunting, and dog owners are afraid to walk their dogs. It's hurting our small-town economies too. Some hunters are no longer taking their hunting trips to hunt pheasant or grouse in Minnesota. That means they are no longer staying in our resorts or motels, and no longer eating at small cafes. Americans spend $56 billion on our dogs each year. It is unfair that we have to risk their lives, when proven safe and effective alternative trapping methods are readily available.

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No state that has protected dogs from body grip traps with sensible regulation has shown any reduction in fur harvest, so I believe Minnesota can do this, too.

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We got our ONLY legislative hearing in the MN Senate on March 9, 2015. We've been trying to get that hearing since 2012, and in the meantime, innocent dogs were killed, and their owners were left grief-stricken. Our pets can’t afford to wait any longer. This has got to be the year!

​Thank you for considering my letter. I will be following this important issue at the Capitol.

​Sincerely,

Your name