

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GROUPS SIGN LETTER QUESTIONING USE OF \$400K FOR SO-CALLED EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Anchorage** - Former lieutenant governor Lowell Thomas, Jr. and long-time Alaska conservationist Peg Tileston delivered a coalition letter today to Governor Palin asking her office not to spend \$400,000 of taxpayer money for a so-called "education campaign" on the state's controversial aerial wolf control program.

The letter says, "Although disguised as an educational campaign, in reality, this funding could improperly influence the outcome of the pending ballot measure and contribute to a perception that the state is using public funds to influence an election." The letter urges Governor Palin to "put an immediate stop to this inappropriate use of public money and allow the vote on the 2008 ballot measure to be free of political interference."

The groups signing the letter say the government should leave development of campaign materials to private individuals and organizations. Utilizing \$400,000 to convince Alaskans of the importance of a program that costs more than \$2 million dollars over the last two years to kill a few hundred wolves is fiscally irresponsible. This effort is likely to improperly influence the upcoming vote on the ballot initiative to be held on this issue in August 2008.

Delivered by John Toppenberg of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance, the letter was signed by 12 individuals or groups representing thousands of members and supporters in Alaska. Signers to the letter included the Alaska Center for the Environment, Alaska Public Interest Research Group, Defenders of Wildlife, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society, National Parks Conservation Association, and the Northern Alaska Environmental Center. Several businesses signed on to the letter, including Alaska Wildland Adventures, The Ascending Path guide service and Wilderness Birding Adventures.

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