

Dear Chair Brown and Supervisors,

I am writing to submit comments in support of the proposed project described in the final EIR which consists of the approval of the Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) program which includes the approval of a five year cooperative service agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Wildlife Service's California (APHIS WS-CA) office for wildlife damage management assistance to the county.

Through this agreement the IWDM program can continue to use both non-lethal and lethal means to assist in resolving wildlife damage issues. Non-lethal technical assistance is needed and often helps to improve wildlife damage situations, but there are times when lethal alternatives are required. Limiting a IWDM program to only non-lethal options will be a disservice to the residents of the county who could face situations with wildlife damage that are unresolvable without a lethal option administered by a trained professional such as APHIS WS-CA staff.

The IWDM program in Mendocino County is not just about reducing livestock impacts from predation, it also includes public health protection (i.e. rabies), technical support for wildlife problems (i.e. how to keep skunks/racoons from inhabiting homes), improving water quality/soil erosion issues (i.e. wild pig rooting) and lessening property/crop/resource damage related to wildlife (i.e. coyotes biting drip hose or bears girdling redwood trees).

For these reasons, I encourage you to 1) pass a resolution to certify the final EIR and related CEQA requirements for the proposed project, 2) pass a resolution to adopt the proposed project IWDM program related to the final EIR prepared in accordance with CEQA and 3) through the resolution, authorize the Agricultural Commissioner to bring forward to the Board for approval, at a later date, a five-year cooperative agreement between the County and APHIS WS-CA, as well as an annual work and financial plan for the operation of the IWDM program.

Sincerely,

Kaitlyn Reed