

Dear Board of Supervisors,

I am opposed to renewing a contract with USDA Wildlife Services. I understand that there is a legitimate concern among ranchers regarding this topic but there are also less costly, more effective & humane ways of handling wildlife.

Both Marin and Sonoma County have successfully operated non-lethal methods of managing wildlife without the assistance of the USDA Wildlife for 20 and 7 years respectively. Further, our neighbors in Humboldt county have just decided that while they will renew their contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services program today that will reduce its killing of wildlife involved in conflicts with residents by prioritizing non-lethal measures.

Further, I have serious concerns about how the staff of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Wildlife decide when to act in lethal ways. Between 1997 - 2017, one trapper, Chris Brennan, claims to have killed approximately 400 dogs. Collectively, the agency also killed 181 mountain lions, 261 black bears, 235 gray foxes, 112 bobcats and 4,119 coyotes in Mendocino County.

Finally, I would prefer to see my tax dollars spent on a system that is more forward thinking and science based. Ranchers have been using a system to eradicate problematic wildlife for many many years without long-term success. There are better ways to achieve the goal of successfully ranching in the wild. Now is the time to start using those better ways.

Thank you,

Jennifer Cheek-Payan
Hopland

Sources:

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1409&context=hwi>

https://biologicaldiversity.org/w/news/press-releases/humboldt-county-agrees-prioritize-nonlethal-solutions-wildlife-conflict-2020-05-05/email_view/

Conservationists Sue Mendocino County Challenging Environmental Review of Contract with Federal Wildlife Killing Program - YubaNet