

To the Board of Supervisors:

I'm writing as a California resident to urge you to end Mendocino County's contract with the USDA Wildlife Services. Its lethal Integrated Wildlife Damage Management (IWDM) Program hurts all of us.

What the USDA calls "wildlife services" is really a program that serves the financial interests of agricultural and ranching companies at huge cost to the ecosystem on which we all depend. For 90 years, the program has used cruel methods to kill thousands of wild animals, all to serve private interests. This violates the Public Trust Doctrine, which says wildlife is held in the public trust for the benefit of all.

In 2020, California Wildlife Services killed 24,264 wild native animals statewide, including 56 black bears, 39 mountain lions, and 3,252 coyotes. Our environment can't sustain this ecological assault. Research, including your own draft environmental impact report, shows that when we harm species like mountain lions, we damage the ecosystem and the planet.

The USDA lethal wildlife program is cruel, it harms the ecosystem, and it directs public policy to protect economic interests of one sector at the expense of the public's interest in a healthy environment. I hope you will create a Non-lethal Wildlife Damage Management (NWDM) Program to be administered locally. Californians are counting on you to protect the environment so that we can all thrive.

Thank you.

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