

Please include my following comments on Agenda Item 6a) (1) to terminate the Cooperative Service Agreement with USDA Wildlife Services.

The county contract with USDA Wildlife Services that funds the killing of wildlife predators on private property supports irresponsible farming and ranching practices that unnecessarily put their livestock and agricultural crops at risk because of their unwillingness to take the non-lethal measures necessary to avoid the problem in the first place, such as proper fencing and other approaches that avoid predation issues instead of addressing them after the losses occur. These measures may increase the costs of production to some extent, but it is not the county's responsibility to subsidize their costs.

County impacts from the Covid crisis has made our financial situation much tighter than usual and spending significant resources on this unpopular, short-sighted, unethical, unnecessary program needs to be discontinued at this time of budget shortfalls. Instead, implementing Supervisor Haschak's Non-Lethal Wildlife Damage Management Program could be done at less cost and with more effective long-term results by emphasizing prevention of the problems instead of killing the wildlife which will just attract additional predators into the area to take their place. For example; Bears will frequent a campground if campers don't have a steel storage bin to keep their food, the alternative of just shooting every bear that comes into the campground is an ineffective solution because for everyone you kill, another one will take its place. Bears and other wildlife like eating out at the buffet table just as much as we do.

Taking preventative non-lethal measures is less expensive in the long run for farmers, ranchers, and the public interest. Neighboring Sonoma and Marin counties have tried this approach with positive outcomes. Taking science based non-lethal approaches can get good results, instead of the cruel and inhumane killing that never seems to solve the problems as evidenced by the unending renewals of the ineffective USDA Wildlife Services contract.

Richard Ettelson,