

Esteemed Board Members,

I am writing to you today in opposition of the termination of the county's contracts with USDA Wildlife Services. As a long time resident of rural areas of this county I urge you to please vote no on terminating this contract. Although no one is pleased by the thought of lethal use when it comes to wildlife control it is sometimes very necessary. I think it is important to look closely at the nature of our county. We have many residents who live on the edge of a multitude of predator habitats and as such we have residents who interact with these animals very often. In a county where residents have facebook pages dedicated to following the movements of mountain lions I believe that it is imperative to work with Wildlife Services to make sure that we are protecting ourselves, our property (including pets and livestock), and our neighbors.

Currently I reside in the Covelo area. My residence is located just outside of town on the valley floor. I have a small hobby farm and have had various issues over the years with wildlife. In a normal month I will witness a multitude of wildlife interacting with my domesticated animals, this includes possums, skunks, foxes, deer, bobcats, and even bear and Mountain Lions. These predators often make meals out of local livestock and pets. Once they know where a meal comes from deterring them is not always possible.

Now I pose the following thoughts, What happens when a child is playing in their backyard out Little Valley Road in Fort Bragg and comes face to face with the mountain lion that has been making meals out of the families barn cats? What about the families who live in the Hearst area of Willits? When the local bears decide that their chicken coops are nothing more than a morning buffet? These animals learn where dinner can be found and large predators do not see young children playing in the woods as big and scary. Mendocino County has a long history with The USDA Wildlife Services because they are nessicary. When hogs come in and destroy millions of dollars worth of a grape crop in Hopland it is the USDA Wildlife Services that help to fix the problem. Please think long and hard about the impacts of terminating this contract. USDA Wildlife services do not go straight to lethal solutions but they do have the ability to when it is deemed truly needed. Please do not take away their abilities to protect our citizens and our properties.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter,

Amber C. Grable