Hello,

As a Rhodes Scholar studying Zoology at the University of Oxford, and as a wildlife-loving conservation scientist, I am writing to affirm that there are times when lethal control is a necessary tool and to remove it as an option can cause great harm for biodiversity.

The proposal to cancel the cooperative service agreement with the USDA Wildlife Services program and limit the replacement program through the county Animal Care Services to only wildlife exclusionary work is short sided.

The presentation prepared for the March 23rd Board of Supervisors meeting does not provide any background related to the reasons for proposing the cancellation of the USDA Wildlife Services. The presentation only focuses on the concept of the consolidation of Animal Control and Animal Care Services as well as the expansion within this consolidation to provide a limited scope of wildlife exclusionary work.

The agenda item does not provide any information on what types of wildlife species or wildlife interaction issues this newly consolidated Animal Care staffing unit will address, nor does the presentation provide any analysis on the overall costs for the increased staff, facility improvements, vehicles, equipment and training that will be required as part of this proposal.

Through the cooperative service agreement with Wildlife Services the county integrated wildlife damage management program (IWDM) can continue to use both non-lethal and lethal means in order to assist property owners, businesses, private citizens and other agencies 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 is 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 Wildlife Services staff.

Best,

Clara Lepard