

From: Jon Spitz, Laytonville

To: Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Re: Renewal of Wildlife Services contract -- I am opposed

There is really only one legitimate reason for there to be a Wildlife Services trapper in Mendocino County and that is to execute depredation permits issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. CDFW only issues depredation permits for two species, mountain lions and bears, and then, only if the property owner can demonstrate to a Game Warden that they have tried non-lethal means to protect their property. From 1997 to 2017, Wildlife Services killed on average 9 mountain lions and 13 black bears a year in Mendocino County. The State of California contracts with Wildlife Services to provide trappers to execute these depredation permits. Between 2017 and 2020 when the County suspended its contract with Wildlife Services pending an Environmental Impact Report, notorious Wildlife Services trapper Chris Brennan was still here to execute depredation permits.

Basically, Mendocino County's contract with Wildlife Services is for trappers to kill all the other smaller animals that mess with peoples' property like bobcats, foxes, raccoons, skunks and, by far and away the most persecuted animal of all, coyotes, killed at the behest of ranchers. Killing wildlife in this way is not only cruel and inhumane, it is completely ineffective at protecting peoples' property. Doris Duncan of Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue has a lot of experience dealing with human/wildlife conflicts, and she has told this board that if you don't properly exclude an animal from access to your property, killing an offending animal will only lead to another animal moving into the territory.

Paying Wildlife Services to kill these wonderful wild animals that so enrich our lives here in Mendocino County is an ineffective and unconscionable expenditure of scarce taxpayer dollars. I urge this board not to renew the County's \$189,556 contract with Wildlife Services, and to terminate it at the earliest possible date.

I also urge this board to contract with a wildlife exclusion service that can educate county residents on non-lethal means of protecting their property and also help them set up exclusion devices. Wildlife exclusion is now considered the best management practice by wildlife experts and it is the direction that forward thinking wildlife managers are headed. It's time for Mendocino County to enter the 21st century of wildlife management.

Thank you for your time and for doing the right thing by Mendocino County's residents and wildlife.