

PETER A. DEFAZIO
4TH DISTRICT, OREGON

TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
RANKING MEMBER



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

March 21, 2017

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

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The Honorable Kate Brown
Governor
254 State Capitol Building
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97310

Dear Governor Brown,

I applaud the \$940,280 of cuts in your Recommended Budget to reduce funding for lethal control of predatory animals from the Oregon Departments of Agriculture and Fish and Wildlife.

Reducing funding for Oregon's predatory animal control program is long overdue. This money is used by counties for contracts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildlife Services, an agency whose methods pose a threat to wildlife, people and domestic pets. Not only are Wildlife Services' methods inherently dangerous, cruel, and indiscriminate, but the agency has a track record of negligence and unaccountability.

I have been trying to eliminate the Wildlife Services lethal predator control program for over 30 years, including when I served as a Lane County Commissioner in the 1980's. Over the years, I've been disheartened by disturbing instances where domestic pets and individuals in Oregon and other states have been poisoned by M-44 sodium cyanide ejectors set by Wildlife Services. I've had several constituents who have lost their beloved pets to these indiscriminate devices. So far in March three dogs have died in nearby states. A 14-year-old boy in Idaho accidentally set off an M-44 not far from his backyard and watched his dog die an agonizing death in front of him. The only reason he wasn't poisoned was because the wind was blowing the other direction. And a family out for a walk on the prairie in Wyoming lost two dogs to an M-44 while their 8-year-old girl watched. Scores of these devices are currently set in Oregon just waiting for another child or dog to trigger them.

Last month's killing of wolf OR-48 after ingesting the poison from the M-44 device is yet another recent example of this agency's careless and negligent use of dangerously indiscriminate lethal devices. Wildlife Services agent in Wallowa county had set a baited M-44 in an attempt to target coyotes at a landowner's request. Instead, wolf OR-48 tugged on the bait, cyanide was injected into his mouth, and he met a painful death.

Wildlife Services is an agency that operates with little-to-no public accountability. They use taxpayer dollars to kill predators to benefit private ranching interests, among other activities. They don't use the best available science, which shows their methods are counter-productive. In addition to M-44s, they use other lethal methods like aerial gunning, leghold traps, strangling neck snares, and Compound

1080 poison livestock protection collars. These methods are expensive, inhumane, and unnecessary for the protection of humans and livestock. More effective, non-lethal methods are available, but they are widely ignored by Wildlife Services, who provides the ranchers no incentive to use them.

Please do whatever you can to be sure your budget cuts to Wildlife Services survive the Legislature's review of your Recommended Budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. DeFazio". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress