

From: Scott Beckstead
To: [JWMNR Exhibits](#)
Subject: H.B. 5010 - Eliminate Funding for USDA Wildlife Services
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2017 7:14:27 PM
Attachments: [HB 5010 Testimony.docx](#)
[FINAL Gov Brown TY Predator Control Budget Rec 3.21.17.pdf](#)

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 5010
TO ELIMINATE FUNDING FOR U.S.D.A. WILDLIFE SERVICES
IN OREGON**

**SCOTT BECKSTEAD
SENIOR OREGON DIRECTOR, RURAL OUTREACH DIRECTOR
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
MARCH 29, 2017**

Co-Chairs Frederick and Witt, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.B. 5010, the bill to appropriate funds to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The Humane Society of the United States supports this legislation insofar as it eliminates funding for U.S.D.A. Wildlife Services, the rogue federal agency that indiscriminately kills family pets, protected wildlife, and endangered species at taxpayer expense.

Last week in Idaho, when young Canyon Mansfield and his three year-old Lab, Casey, headed out together to play in the area behind their home in eastern Idaho, they expected exactly the kind of adventure that kids and dogs have together. Little did they know their outing would end with Casey dead and Canyon and his family being treated for exposure to deadly cyanide.

Unbeknownst to the Mansfield family, a deadly hazard had been placed near their home by USDA Wildlife Services in the form of an M-44 cyanide bomb, a deadly and indiscriminate device created to kill coyotes, wild dogs, and wolves. Canyon smelled the attractant on the portion of the device above ground, and when he licked or chewed on it, the device exploded, filling his mouth with cyanide, and knocking Canyon off his feet, covering the boy with the deadly poison. Canyon watched helplessly as his beloved companion died a slow and agonizing death – and the family’s heartbreak was compounded when he and his entire family had to be treated at a hospital for exposure to cyanide.

Earlier this month, a protected Oregon gray wolf was killed by an M-44 set by USDA Wildlife Services, sparking outrage among Oregonians. The agency confirmed that nearly 100 M-44’s are dispersed across the state, placing the public, family pets, and protected wildlife at risk of death.

The arrogance of USDA Wildlife Services is perhaps best exemplified by the language it uses whenever one of its cruel and indiscriminate devices – whether it’s an M-44, a leghold trap, or strangling wire neck snare – catches a family pet. Instead of apologizing for the death, it issues a bland statement that refers to the tragedy as an “unintentional lethal take” – as though taking the life of a family member like Casey is on par with a hunter who inadvertently shoots the wrong animal. And while the agency responds to public outrage with such tone-deaf euphemisms, it strains credulity by minimizing and downplaying the frequency of these incidents. Decades of obfuscation and outright lies by USDA Wildlife Services has led to an

internal culture of “shoot, shovel, and shut up” among its agents whenever a “nontarget” animal dies.

In other words, had Casey’s death not been witnessed by the boy who loved him, but by the agent who set the device, one has every reason to believe the family might not have ever learned about what happened. USDA Wildlife Services works hard at misleading the public about the extent of the carnage it causes, and at hiding information about its methods and operations.

I am very proud that my United States Congressman, Peter DeFazio, has remained steadfast in his battle to reform USDA Wildlife Services. Congressman Defazio has taken the agency to task over the years for its lack of transparency and arrogant disregard of public accountability, and within the past few days has introduced a bill in Congress to ban the use of M-44 and poisonous Compound 1080 collars. The Congressman also issued a letter to Oregon Governor Kate Brown, thanking her for eliminating state contracts for USDA Wildlife Services from her proposed state budget. We applaud Congressman DeFazio in this fight, and urge Oregon lawmakers to join his effort to protect the public, family pets, and protected wildlife from the lethal tools the agency employs across the landscape, including our public lands.

DeFazio isn’t alone in demanding that M-44’s be removed from the landscape. In response to the Mansfield family’s ordeal and the killing of the Oregon wolf, even the conservative, pro-livestock Eastern Oregonian has called on USDA Wildlife Services to remove all M-44’s from Oregon. And just yesterday, the Eugene Register-Guard editorialized:

“The concerted, barbarous attack on native predators — and the threat this poses to the public — continues despite statistics from the Wildlife Services’ parent agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, showing it serves no real purpose. Predators such as wolves are not a major source of livestock deaths, years of statistics show. A far bigger threat is poor animal husbandry, including failure to provide proper veterinary care — which doesn’t generate newspaper headlines.”

Oregonians have consistently made it clear that in our state, we respect animals and will afford them protection under the law from needless suffering.. Our beautiful state is no place for a rogue federal agency that treats animals with sadistic cruelty and regards demands for transparency and public accountability with contempt and obfuscation.

<http://registerguard.com/rg/opinion/35422708-78/rein-in-wildlife-agency.html.csp>

<http://www.eastoregonian.com/eo/editorials/20170322/our-view-remove-m-44s-from-oregon>

http://idahostatejournal.com/outdoors/xtreme_idaho/sheriff-others-demand-usda-stop-using-cyanide-bombs-in-bannock/article_5fecfa63-52de-5078-801a-611dd55d0923.html

<http://www.eastoregonian.com/apnewsbreak-cyanide-device-on-us-land-broke-agency-policy-eo-ap-webfeeds-news-northwest92268e367ad84965a8e2fb9d59ee163c>

For the foregoing reasons, we urge this committee to approve HB 5010 insofar as it eliminates state funding for USDA Wildlife Services in Oregon.

Thank you for considering our position, and for your service to the people and animals of Oregon.

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The Humane Society of the United States is the nation's largest animal protection organization, rated [most effective](#) by our peers. For 60 years, we have celebrated the protection of all animals and confronted all forms of cruelty. We are the nation's largest provider of [hands-on services](#) for animals, caring for more than 100,000 animals each year, and we prevent cruelty to millions more through our [advocacy campaigns](#).

The HSUS is approved by the [Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance](#) for all 20 standards for charity accountability, and was named by [Worth Magazine](#) as one of the 10 most fiscally responsible charities. To support The HSUS, please make a [monthly donation](#), or give in [another way](#). You can also [volunteer](#) for The HSUS, and see our [55 ways you can help](#) animals. Read more about our 60 years of [transformational change](#) for animals, and visit us online at humanesociety.org.

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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- 612 SE JACKSON STREET, #9
ROSEBURG, OR 97470
(541) 440-3523
- defazio.house.gov

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, flowing style with some capitalization.

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress