



February 17, 2009

Director Peter Orszag, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20503
Fax: 202.395.3888 , Phone: 202.395.3080
porszag@omb.eop.gov

Re: Get the Federal Government Out of the Wildlife Extermination Business

Dear Mr. Orszag:

The 60 undersigned groups, biologists, and individuals request urgent reform on a wildlife-management front. President Barack Obama has called for budget reform and line-by-line review to root out government programs that do not work. In his inaugural address of January 20th, Mr. Obama called upon government to “restore science,” make government “work” and when it does not to “end” programs.

One obvious candidate for the axe is Wildlife Services, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture,¹ which spends over \$100 million annually to kill more than one million animals—including black and grizzly bears, beavers, mountain lions, coyotes, and wolves. Most of this killing is done to protect private industry and public lands ranchers, yet all Americans foot the bill for this ineffective, wasteful, ecologically unsound, and ethically indefensible agency.

Between 2004 and 2007, Wildlife Services killed more than 8.3 million animals, largely at taxpayer expense. We contend this agency is:

- **Biologically and Fiscally Unsound:** Both biologists and economists criticize Wildlife Services for using a “sledgehammer approach” to wildlife management, which relies largely on non-selective killing methods such as poison, primitive neck snares and traps, and aerial gunning, but fails to look at long-term, ecologically sound, and humane solutions to human-wildlife conflicts;
- **Unnecessary.** A handful of livestock producers actually experience predator problems while the vast majority of unintended cattle and sheep deaths come from birthing problems, disease, or weather, *not* predation. In essence, Wildlife Services’ livestock protection program fails to provide for the economic security to the businesses it supposedly helps, and it is a costly subsidy that unfairly competes with private animal control businesses for contracts;

¹ The full name of the agency is U.S. Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service-Wildlife Services; its acronym is USDA-APHIS-WS.

- **Sloppy and Dangerous.** Wildlife Services litters the American landscape with deadly poisons and traps that are inherently indiscriminate and often kill curious pets, threatened and endangered species, and other animals that are unintentionally killed. Between 2002 and 2006, Wildlife Services failed numerous federal audits for its failure to safely inventory, store, and control access to harmful chemical weapons. In 2008, the Environmental Protection Agency charged Wildlife Services for improper placement of a sodium cyanide booby trap on public lands that harmed a Fish and Wildlife Service biologist and killed his dog. In addition, the Wildlife Services aerial gunning program caused at least ten human fatalities and 28 injuries to federal employees and contractors; and
- **Anachronistic, Unethical, and Environmentally Abusive.** Because of this agency’s history of misuse and abuse of wildlife and public lands, Congress has called it to task several times over its 124-year history. A 1995 GAO report found that Wildlife Services fails to use non-lethal methods to protect livestock and a 2001 GAO report said the agency could not justify its costs relative to its benefits. Moreover, the American Society of Mammalogists - one of the oldest and most respected professional associations of scientists in North America – has issued three resolutions, in 1928, 1934, and 1999, that called on the agency to (in the latest reiteration), “cease indiscriminate, preemptive, lethal control programs on federal, state, and private lands....and to focus on the implementation of non-lethal control strategies, compensatory measures, and sound animal husbandry techniques.” Wildlife Services acts without public scrutiny and is unaccountable.

Astonishingly, even though practical and time-tested non-lethal alternatives are available, Wildlife Services continues to rely on lethal, indiscriminate methods that waste millions of dollars in worthless, “research” projects that provide little to no practical applicability. In the meantime, new, more effective non-lethal techniques that have been developed are seldom actually employed in the field. The few useful functions of this agency could be easily transferred to state, local, and private agencies without ill effect. The Portland, Oregon International Airport, for example, handles its own bird-strike prevention program.

As the Obama Administration wields its scalpel to root out costly and wasteful programs, we urge the administration to see this agency for what it is and act by getting rid of this costly, ineffective, and unjustifiable boondoggle. Some of us have worked on this issue for over 15 years – if you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely yours,



Wendy Keefover-Ring
WildEarth Guardians
 P.O. Box 6413
 Bozeman, MT 59771-6413
 303.819.5229
wendy@wildearthguardians.org
www.wildearthguardians.org

and on behalf of:

Jeff Ruch
**Public Employees for
Environmental Responsibility
(PEER)**
2000 P Street, NW; Suite 240
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.265.7337
jruch@peer.org
www.peer.org

Nancy Zierenberg
f/k/a Wildlife Damage Review
1755 W. Calle Pacifica
Tucson, AZ 85745
520.882.7663
nzberg4@cox.net

Brooks Fahy
Predator Defense
PO Box 5446
Eugene, OR 97405
541.937.4261
brooks@predatordefense.org
www.predatordefense.org

Michael J. Robinson
Center for Biological Diversity
P.O. Box 53166
Pinos Altos, NM 88053
575.534.0360
michaelr@biologicaldiversity.org
www.biologicaldiversity.org

Camilla H. Fox
Project Coyote
P.O. Box 5007
Larkspur, CA 94977
415.945.3232
cfox@projectcoyote.org
www.ProjectCoyote.org

Brian Vincent
Big Wildlife
PO Box 489
Williams, OR 97544
541.846.1352
brian@bigwildlife.org
www.bigwildlife.org

Jarid Manos
Great Plains Restoration Council
PO Box 1206
Fort Worth, TX 76101
817.838.9022
greatplains@gprc.org
www.gprc.org

Kirk Robinson, PhD, JD
Western Wildlife Conservancy
68 S. Main St., Suite 400
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101
801.468.1535
lynx@xmission.com
www.westwildcon.org

Sara L. Carlson
The Cougar Fund
P.O. Box 122
Jackson, WY 83001
307.733.0797
sara@cougarfund.org
www.cougarfund.org

Jeff Kuyper
Los Padres ForestWatch
P.O. Box 831
Santa Barbara, CA 93102
805.617.4610 x11
jeff@LPFW.org
www.LPFW.org

Kevin Mueller
Utah Environmental Congress
1817 South Main, Ste. 10
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
801.466.4055
kevin@uec-utah.org
www.uec-utah.org

Meredith Taylor
Taylor Outfitters
6360 Hwy 26
Dubois, WY 82513
307.455.2161
metaylor@wyoming.com

Denise Boggs
Conservation Congress
PO Box 5
Lewistown, MT 59457
406.538.4220
denise@midrivers.com

Veronica Egan
Great Old Broads for Wilderness
P O Box 2924
Durango, CO 81302
970.385.9577
ronni@greatoldbroads.org
www.greatoldbroads.org

Erik Molvar
Biodiversity Conservation Alliance
P.O. Box 1512
Laramie, WY 82073
307.742.7978
erik@voiceforthewild.org
www.voiceforthewild.org

James Catlin
Wild Utah Project
68 S. Main Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84101
801.328.3550
jim@wildutahproject.org
www.wildutahproject.org

Tom Huhnerkoch, DVM
Mountain Cats Trust
21315 Englewood Road
Lead, SD 57754
605.584.1958
ccats@mato.com

Lynne K. Stone
Boulder-White Clouds Council
P.O. Box 6313
Ketchum ID 83340
lstone.bwcc@gmail.com
www.wildwhiteclouds.org

Jon Marvel
Western Watersheds Project
Box 1770, Hailey, ID 83333
208.788.2290
jon@westernwatersheds.org
www.westernwatershed.org

Mike Hudak
Public Lands Without Livestock
38 Oliver Street
Binghamton, NY 13904-1516
607.330.0351
mikehudak@stny.rr.com
www.mikehudak.com/PLWL

Tom Hopkins
Ventana Wilderness Alliance
PO Box 506
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
831.429.9010
tomhopkins@cruzio.com
www.ventanawild.org

John Toppenberg
Alaska Wildlife Alliance
PO Box 202022
Anchorage, AK 99520
907.277.9819
john@akwildlife.org
www.akwildlife.org

Brent Fenty
Oregon Natural Desert Association
16 NW Kansas Ave.
Bend, OR 97701
541.330.2638
bfenty@onda.org
www.onda.org

Gill M. Sorg
Mesilla Valley Audubon Society
Las Cruces, New Mexico
575.644.0660
sorg@zianet.com
<http://www.mvaudubon.org>

Robert Hoskins
GravelBar
64 Burris-Lenore Road
Crowheart WY 82512
307.486.2304
rhoskins@dteworld.com

Ralph Maughan
Wolf Recovery Foundation
PO Box 444
Pocatello, ID 83204
208.417.0906
rmaughan2@cablone.net
www.forwolves.org

Steve Pedery
Oregon Wild
5825 N Greeley Ave
Portland, OR 97217
503.283.6343
sp@oregonwild.org
www.oregonwild.org

Norman A. Bishop
Wolf Recovery Foundation
4898 Itana Circle
Bozeman, MT 59715
406.582.0597
nabishop@mcn.net

Bill and Ida Beaudin
**Conservation Projects
Nature Photography**
8485 Red Spring Valley Rd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
719.532.0188
Bill.Beaudin@gmail.com
Ida.Beaudin@gmail.com

Jerry Black
Wildlife Watchers
450 Trap Club Rd
Jackson Hole, WY 83001
406.829.3618
targhee3002@yahoo.com

Allison Jones
Wild Utah Project
68 South Main Street, Suite 400
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
801.328.3550
Allison@wildutahproject.org
www.wildutahproject.org

Buffalo Bruce
Western NE Resources Council
P.O. Box 612
Chadron, NE 69337
308.432.3458
buffalo.bruce@panhandle.net

Wally Sykes
TrapFree Oregon
Box 733
Joseph, OR 97846
541.432.1030
info@trapfreeoregon.org
www.trapfreeoregon.org

Dave Bemel
Action for Animals
PO Box 45843
Seattle, WA 98145
206.227.5752
afa@afa-online.org
www.afa-online.org

Mary Zoeter
Action for Animals Network
PO Box 9039
Alexandria, VA 22304
703.461.3283
anmlntwk@verizon.net
www.actionforanimalsnetwork.org

Mr. Ara Marderosian
Sequoia ForestKeeper
P.O. Box 2134
Kernville, CA 93238
760.376.4434
www.sequoiaforestkeeper.org
ara@sequoiaforestkeeper.org

Veda Stram
All-Creatures.Org
1612 Lake Drive
Camano Island WA 98282
360.631.5100
veda@all-creatures.org
<http://www.all-creatures.org>

Ann Bryant
BEAR League
4875 Westlake Blvd, Box 393
Homewood, CA 96141
530.525.7297
bearsnsquirrels@sbcglobal.net
www.savebears.org

Dan Miller
Bear River Watershed Council
P.O. Box 404
Richmond, UT 84333-0404
435.258.4432
dmiller@brwcouncil.org
www.brwcouncil.org

Rebecca Bidwell
Butler County Animal Response Team
123 Residence
El Dorado, KS
316.312.5666
themothewolf1@yahoo.com

Will Tuttle, PhD
Circle of Compassion
1083 Vine St.
Healdsburg, CA 95448
508.367.2046
willtuttle@earthlink.net
www.circleofcompassion.org

D'Ann L. Thompson
Country Pet Haven-Rescue
Maryville, MO 64468
crittersrule@hughes.net

Rob Fisher
The Ecological Conservation Organization
120 South Cross Street
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.372.7895
fisher@ecoconservation.org
www.ecoconservation.org

Bill Hedden
Grand Canyon Trust
HC 64 Box 1801
Moab, UT 84532-9610
435.259.5284
bhedden@grandcanyontrust.org
<http://www.grandcanyontrust.org>

Richard H. Schwartz
Jewish Vegetarians of North America
263 Warwick Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10314
718.761.5876
president@jewishveg.com
www.jewishveg.com

Brenda Shoss
Kinship Circle
7380 Kingsbury Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63130
314.863.9445
kinshipcircle@accessus.net
www.kinshipcircle.org

Mike Peterson
Lands Council
25 W. Main St., Ste 222
Spokane, WA 99201
Spokane, WA 99201
509.838.4912
mpetersen@landscouncil.org
www.landscouncil.org

Shaynie Aero
Last Chance for Animals Arizona
221 N. Macdonald St.
Mesa, AZ 85201
shaynie_aero@yahoo.com

Beverly Alba
MassPAWS
PO Box 520136
Winthrop, MA 02152
617.846.5586
masspaws@aol.com
masspaws.petfinder.org/shelters/MA292

Sharon M. Harmon
Oregon Humane Society
PO Box 11364
1067 NE Columbia Blvd
Portland, OR 97211
503.416.2992
sharon@oregonhumane.org
www.oregonhumane.org

Peter Illyn
Restoring Eden
PO Box 877
La Center, WA 98629
360.574.8230
peter_illyn@restoringeden.org
www.restoringeden.org

Hilary White
Sheep Mountain Alliance
PO Box 389
Telluride, CO 81435
970.729.2321
hilary@sheepmountainalliance.org
www.sheepmountainalliance.org

Charles M. Ashley
Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter
31277 Watts Valley Road
Tollhouse, CA
wattsvalleypreservation@gmail.com
www.lca-arizona.org

Shane Jimerfield
Siskiyou Project
213 SE H. St.
Grants Pass, OR 97526
541.476.6648
shane@siskiyou.org
www.siskiyou.org

Dave Willis
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
P.O. Box 512
Ashland, OR 97520
541.482.8660
sodamtn@mind.net

Tara Zuardo and Claire Tonry
**Student Animal Legal Defense Fund
at Lewis & Clark Law School**
10015 SW Terwilliger Blvd
Portland, OR
503.768-6795
saldf@lclark.edu
<http://law.lclark.edu/org/saldf>

Julie Schneider
Wild West Ecological Consulting
PO Box 311
Paradox, CO 81429
wildwesteco@gmail.com

Frank Wendland
W.O.L.F. Sanctuary
PO Box 1544
La Porte, CO 80535
970.416.9531
fwendland@wolfsanctuary.net
www.wolfsanctuary.net

George Nickas
Wilderness Watch
Box 9175
Missoula, Montana 59807
406.542.2048
gnickas@wildernesswatch.org
<http://www.wildernesswatch.org>

Scientists and individuals: {Note: Some of the affiliations below are provided for identification purposes only and do not indicate a position on behalf of the institutions}

Marc Bekoff, Professor, Ph.D.
Ecology and Evolutionary Biology
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80309-0334 USA
<http://literati.net/Bekoff>
www.ethologicaethics.org

Ken Keefover-Ring, Ph.D.
839 Russell Laboratories
Department of Entomology
1630 Linden Drive
University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI 53706
keefover@entomology.wisc.edu

Debra L. Donahue
255 Highway 10
Jelm, WY 82063
307.742.4585
ddonahue@uwyo.edu

Malcolm R. MacPherson, Ph.D.
Retired Scientist
34 Coyote Mountain Rd.
Santa Fe, NM 87505
505-989-9502
nr1mrm@cnsf.com

Brian Peck
615 Trap Rd.
Columbia Falls, Mt.59912
406.892.3767
glrbear@centurytel.net

John Nicholson
3092 S Holman St
Lakewood, CO 80228
johnnick@colorado.net

Molly Attell
1272 Balboa Avenue
Burlingame, CA 94010
sattell@earthlink.net

Deirdre Butler
PO Box 1337
Lyons, CO 80540
deirdre@cogico.com

Lorie Baker
918 South Fifth Street West
Missoula, MT 59801
LorettaBaker1@yahoo.com

Axel C. Ringe
1840 Lafayette Road
New Market, TN 37820
onyxfarm@bellsouth.net

Sam Booher
4387 Roswell Dr
Augusta, GA 30907
sbooher@aol.com

John T. Burrige
PO Box 14444
East Providence RI 02914-0444
burrige@cox.net