

Submitter: Linda Bernhardt

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2403

Dear Committee Members,

As farmers, my husband and I strongly oppose HB 2403. Prevention is the only way to combat conflicts, and non-lethal predator control should be the only option (we have spent a great of money to protect our animals and prevent conflict). The state's wildlife belongs to all of us, and one group should not have the right to kill animals for the behest of a few property owners. They already have the right to destroy animals in the act of livestock or crop destruction. The districts would use a notorious agency known for the indiscriminate use of tools that catch far too many non-target animals, including endangered species, often causing great suffering.

Scientific proof that the practices of Wildlife Services control livestock damage is markedly lacking. In fact, the best available science shows that killing carnivores worsens conflicts with livestock. In addition, countless taxpayer dollars are wasted by spending far more to kill predators than the actual damage those predators cause.

HB 2403 does not require recipients of district funds to use or even consider nonlethal alternatives, which abound. Given Wildlife Service's record for emphasizing killing of wildlife as its preferred solution to human-wildlife conflict, any state-created funding mechanism for the program should include requirements to consider and use effective nonlethal alternatives like livestock guardian animals, foxlights, penning, fladry, range riding, and livestock carcass disposal. This bill also includes a provision specifically designed to prevent the public from holding the special districts accountable. This bill is unacceptable. Coexistence with essential native predators is key, especially in this age of extinction.

Thank you