

Oppose the Campbell-DeFazio Amendment to Restrict Funding to the USDA-Wildlife Services Program

From: The Honorable Jim Matheson

Bill: H.R. 2112

Date: 6/15/2011

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Dear Colleague,

We urge you to vote against any attempt on the floor to restrict funding to U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Wildlife Services (WS).

Any attempt to restrict funding and operations of WS jeopardizes management of wildlife conflicts with human health and safety, animal disease management and production of food on family farms and ranches. Wildlife is a publically-owned resource to be managed by state and federal wildlife agencies. The government's involvement ensures that each response to wildlife damage is biologically sound and in compliance with all federal, state and local laws and regulations.

Critics want to abolish the program that provides wildlife control at most of the nation's airports, controls efforts for avian influenza, protects baby lambs and calves from publicly regulated predators, such as coyotes and wolves, as well as administers millions of rabies vaccinations for raccoons and coyotes each year.

The financial breakdown of WS includes appropriated federal funds (52%) with the balance as cooperative funding (non-federal). WS is one of the few government agencies that cost shares almost half of its program work with cooperating entities. WS funds supports all of its programs including urban wildlife damage management, rabies management, control of highly pathogenic avian influenza, wildlife disease surveillance and monitoring, protecting threatened and endangered species and protecting civil aircraft from wildlife strikes.

Again, critics wrongly assert that WS rarely uses non-lethal means of controlling predators nor does it spend significant resources developing new ones. Of all wildlife encountered by WS agents, 86% are dispersed using non-lethal methods accounting for more than 15.3 million animals in 2007 alone. In addition, 75% of WS' National Wildlife Research Center's budget is dedicated toward identifying, developing and evaluating non-lethal technologies.

Supporters of the Campbell-DeFazio amendment to cut funding for WS claim that a cut in livestock protection does not impact other WS programs and functions. This is simply not the case. **In fact, any loss of funding which results in the reduction of trained WS personnel has a direct impact on all WS functions, including the protection of human health and safety.** Quite simply, WS personnel perform tasks and administer programs across the disciplines of the agency. An employee, whose job is lost because he/she performs livestock protection, will not be able to assist in disease monitoring, protection of endangered species, or abatement of bird strikes to aircraft.

Please join us in protecting this critical program. For more information please contact Ashley Martin with Rep. Matheson (Ashley.martin@mail.house.gov or 5-3011) or Missy Small with Rep. Simpson (missy.small@mail.house.gov or 5-5531).

Sincerely,

Jim Matheson

Mike Simpson

Member of Congress

Member of Congress