

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member, Committee on  
Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Andy Harris  
Chair, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural  
Development, Food and Drug Administration,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sanford Bishop, Jr.  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Granger, Ranking Member DeLauro, Chair Harris, and Ranking Member Bishop:

Wildlife causes more than \$12.8 billion in damage each year to natural resources, public infrastructures, private property and agriculture. USDA Wildlife Services (WS) works to prevent, minimize or manage this damage and to protect human health and safety from conflicts with wildlife. Wildlife damage to U.S. livestock, aquaculture, small grains, fruits, vegetables and other agricultural products has been estimated to reach nearly \$1 billion annually. Wildlife predators cause more than \$232 million in death loss to livestock; field crop losses due to wildlife total \$619 million annually; losses to vegetables, fruits and nuts total \$146 million annually; and 70% of catfish farmers incur wildlife-related damage. The annual industry-wide value of lost catfish sales revenue to cormorants averages \$47.2 million, ranging from \$25.8 million to \$65.4 million, depending upon predation levels in any given year. As a result, WS is an essential program to U.S. agriculture.

WS assists farmers and ranchers in 50 states and 3 territories to reduce the impact of predators on their animals, protecting 9.5 million head of cattle, 5.1 million head of sheep, and 55 million head of other livestock in 340,000 direct control actions. In FY22, WS provided more than 20,800 technical assistance activities that enabled 6,180 livestock producers to implement improved husbandry and methods such as use of guard animals, exclusion, fencing, and predator dispersal. These activities included 19 predator management workshops attended by more than 3,000 individuals from 14 states, dispersal of 121,310 double-crested cormorants, removal of 1,195 cormorants at aquaculture facilities in 22 states to protect farmed fish from avian depredation. The industry is worth \$1.5 billion nationally (per National Marine Fisheries Service).

WS supported USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Services' emergency response efforts to animal diseases, natural disasters, and hazardous spills. In FY22, WS deployed 123 personnel on 267 deployments for Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) and African Swine Fever (ASF). WS personnel have physically deployed to assist 18 states in response to HPAI. WS responded to the ASF detection on the island of Hispaniola and have removed 3,754 feral swine and have sampled 2,431 for ASF on Puerto Rico and US Virgin Islands. The National Wildlife Disease Program (NWDP) also coordinated sample collection and evaluation or assisted state agencies with many other diseases in wildlife to include SARS-CoV-2, plague, tularemia, leptospirosis, rabies, chronic wasting disease, and rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus.

In collaboration with state wildlife agencies, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and tribes, WS

addresses livestock depredation and protects human health and safety related to wolves and grizzly bears. WS manages conflicts with gray wolves or Mexican gray wolves in 11 states. WS conducted operations with grizzly bears in 3 states, dispersing 27, capturing-relocating 18, and lethally removing 7 in FY22. Congressional funding of \$2.5 million in FY22 supported protecting livestock from large carnivore predation in 13 states using nonlethal strategies such as range riding, fladry installation, and electric fence construction. WS filled 31 full-time positions and supported 6 part-time positions in 12 states to implement these strategies. WS' National Wildlife Research Center evaluated the effectiveness of activities to reduce depredation.

In FY22 alone, WS conducted more than 70,000 technical assistance projects to reduce wildlife damage to property in urban, suburban, and rural locations across the country which include: homes, schools, industrial facilities, roads, bridges, airports and airport runways, dams, and electrical and water systems. In addition, WS works to protect wetland habitat, riparian habitat, tidal marsh, and timber from a variety of pest species including feral hogs and nutria, as well as the destruction that beaver can cause. Through cooperator-funded beaver damage management on more than 45,000 sites in 49 states, WS worked to protect roads, bridges, timber, agriculture, property, native habitat, and other natural resources from flooding damage.

In FY22, WS' National Feral Swine Damage Management Program supported 34 projects in 12 states - in cooperation with the Natural Resources Conservation Service under the latest Farm Bill - focusing on specific problem populations, while continuing work to reduce feral swine damage on approximately 188 million acres in 37 states and 3 territories.

WS had 3,477 cooperative service and interagency agreements including agriculture, forestry, private industry, state wildlife agencies, state departments of health, state departments of agriculture, schools, universities, counties, local governments, Tribal governments, homeowner associations, conservation groups and others that together with WS, mitigate the damage and dangers that wildlife can inflict. As a byproduct of operational activities in FY22, WS donated more than 279,000 pounds of meat to food banks and other organizations providing for people in need. WS donated an additional 35,000 pounds of meat for non-human consumption.

WS flew 78 aircraft for 16,291 flight hours over a total of 1.13 million miles of flight operations to conduct livestock protection via predator removal, removal of invasive feral swine and brown tree snakes, aerial delivery of vaccine baits (rabies), emergency response, and other missions.

WS processed more than 17,000 strikes with civil aircraft with more than 10,000 strikes with military aircraft also reported. More than 275,000 wildlife strikes with civil aviation have been reported to the National Wildlife Strike Database for civil aviation since WS began keeping records in 1990. Reported wildlife-aircraft strikes continue to increase as airport managers and biologists prioritize reporting all wildlife strikes to the FAA database. Damaging strikes have decreased because of wildlife mitigation and awareness efforts at airfields. WS provided 343 staff years of direct support to assist a total of 813 civil, military, and joint-use airports including about 75% of all U.S. commercial passenger airports. WS trained 6,098 airport and military personnel to prevent wildlife from colliding with aircraft, improving travel safety. WS also provided direct staff support to reduce aviation hazards at 151 U.S. or coalition military airbases stateside and in southwest Asia, the Pacific Rim, Africa, Europe, and in the British Indian Ocean Territory, and an additional 111 civil-military airports protecting American military aviation assets and personnel.

It has been WS's cooperative nature that has allowed it to accomplish all of the above listed programs and has made it the most cost effective and efficient program in the federal government in the areas of wildlife damage management and public health and safety.

Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l  
Airlines for America  
American Association of Airport Executives  
American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges  
American Beekeeping Federation  
American Dairy Goat Association  
American Dairy Sheep Association  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Goat Federation  
American Horse Council  
American Sheep Industry Association  
American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers  
American Veterinary Medical Association  
Animal Health Institute  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Association of National Grasslands  
Big Game Forever  
Blackfeet Nation Agriculture Development Foundation  
Blackfeet Nation Stock Growers Association  
Catfish Farmers of America  
Catfish Institute  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Exotic Wildlife Association  
East Coast Shellfish Growers Association  
Fur Commission USA  
Livestock Marketing Association  
Mohair Council of America  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Aquaculture Association

Alabama Catfish Producers  
Alabama Cattlemen's Association  
Alabama Farmers Federation  
Alabama Meat Goat and Sheep Producers  
Arizona Cattle Feeders Association  
Arizona Cattle Growers' Association  
Arizona Cattlemen's Association  
Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society  
Arizona Wool Producers Association  
Catfish Farmers of Arkansas  
Arkansas Cattlemen's Association  
Arkansas Farm Bureau  
Arkansas State Sheep Council  
Association of Texas Soil and Water Conservation Districts  
California Agricultural Commissioners and Sealers Association

National Association of Counties  
National Association of Federal Veterinarians  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Farmers Union  
National Grange  
National Lamb Feeders Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Rifle Association  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Sunflower Association  
National Women Involved in Farm Economics  
Natural Fiber Alliance  
North American Meat Institute  
North American Renderers Association  
Northwest Aquaculture Alliance  
Public Lands Council  
R-CALF USA  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Rural and Agriculture Council of America  
Safari Club International  
Society for Range Management  
Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife  
State Agriculture and Rural Leaders Association  
United States Animal Health Association  
U.S. Cattlemen's Association  
United States Trout Farmers Association  
USA Rice  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Management Institute

California Cattlemen's Association  
California Farm Bureau  
California Pork Producers Association  
California Wool Growers Association  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Wool Growers Association  
Connecticut Sheep Breeders Association, Inc  
Delta Council  
Empire Sheep Producers  
Florida Aquaculture Association  
Florida Cattlemen's Association  
Florida Tropical Fish Farms Association  
Garden State Sheep Breeders Inc  
Georgia Agribusiness Council Inc  
Georgia Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia Sheep and Wool Growers Association  
Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association

Hawaii Sheep and Goat Association	New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association
Idaho Cattle Association	New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation	New Mexico Farm & Livestock Bureau
Idaho Outfitters & Guides Association	New Mexico Federal Lands Council
Idaho Wool Growers Association	New Mexico Trappers Association
Illinois Beef Association	New Mexico Wool Growers, Inc
Illinois Lamb and Wool Producers Inc	North Carolina Cattlemen's Association
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota	North Carolina Sheep Producers Association
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas	North Dakota Lamb and Wool Producers Association
Indiana Sheep Association	North Dakota Stockmen's Association
Iowa Cattlemen's Association	North Dakota Department of Agriculture
Iowa Sheep Industry Association	North Dakota Game and Fish Department
Kansas Livestock Association	Ohio Aquaculture Association
Kansas Sheep Association	Ohio Cattlemen's Association
Kentucky Aquaculture Association	Ohio Dairy Producers Association
Kentucky Cattlemen's Association	Ohio Farm Bureau Federation
Kentucky Sheep and Wool Producers Association	Ohio Pork Council
Louisiana Cattlemen's Association	Ohio Poultry Association
Louisiana Farm Bureau	Ohio Sheep Improvement Association
Maine Aquaculture Association	White Tail Deer Farmers of Ohio
Maine Sheep Breeders Association	Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association
Maryland Sheep Breeders Association	Oregon Cattlemen's Association
Massachusetts Federation of Sheep Associations	Oregon Dairy Farmers Association
Meat Sheep Alliance of Florida, Inc	Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
Michigan Aquaculture Association	Oregon Forest Industries Council
Michigan Sheep Producers Association	Oregon Outdoor Council
Minnesota Lamb and Wool Producer Association	Oregon Seed Council
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association	Oregon Sheep Growers Association
Missouri Cattlemen's Association	Oregon Small Woodlands Association
Missouri Sheep Producers, Inc	Oregonians for Food & Shelter
Montana Association of State Grazing Districts	North Central Oregon Livestock Association
Montana Farm Bureau Federation	Pennsylvania Cattlemen's Association
Montana Public Lands Council	Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Montana Stockgrowers Association	Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association
Montana Wool Growers Association	Rhode Island Sheep Cooperative
Nebraska Cattlemen, Inc.	South Carolina Sheep Industries Association
Nebraska Farmers Union	South Dakota Cattlemen's Association
Nebraska Sheep and Goat Producers	South Dakota Sheep Growers Association
Nebraska State Grange	South East Dairy Farmers Association
Nebraska Women Involved in Farm Economics	Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife Idaho
Nevada Cattlemen's Association	Tennessee Cattlemen's Association
Nevada Department of Agriculture	Tennessee Sheep Producers Association
Nevada Farm Bureau Federation	Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association
Nevada Rangeland Resources Commission	Texas Cattle Feeders Association
Nevada Central Committee for State Grazing Boards	Texas Farm Bureau
Nevada Wool Growers Association	Texas Pork Producers Association
New Hampshire Sheep and Wool Growers Association	Texas Sheep and Goat Predator Management Board

Texas Sheep and Goat Raisers' Association  
Texas Wildlife Damage Management  
Association  
The Port Authority of New York and New  
Jersey  
United Dairymen of Arizona  
Utah Cattlemen's Association  
Utah Department of Agriculture and Food  
Utah Farm Bureau Federation  
Utah Wild Sheep Foundation  
Utah Wildlife Board  
Utah Wool Growers Association  
Jack H. Berryman Institute, Utah State  
University  
Vermont Sheep and Goat Association  
Virginia Farm Bureau Federation  
Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Virginia Sheep Producers Association  
Shellfish Growers of Virginia  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
Washington Cattle Feeders Association  
Washington State Animal Damage Control  
Program  
Washington State Sheep Producers  
West Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
West Virginia Farm Bureau  
West Virginia Shepherds Federation  
Western Forestry and Conservation Association  
Western United Dairymen  
Wisconsin Bear Hunters Association  
Wisconsin Cattlemen's Association  
Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation  
Wisconsin Firearms Owners, Ranges, Club and  
Educators  
Wisconsin Sheep Breeders Cooperative  
Wyoming Animal Damage Management Board  
Wyoming Association of County Predatory  
Animal Boards  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Wyoming Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife  
Wyoming Stock Growers Association  
Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wyoming Wool Growers Association