



MISSOURI FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

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March 3, 2026

The Honorable Harriet Hageman
Chair, House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Hageman:

Our organization is deeply concerned about the growing threat black vultures pose to livestock producers across the state. These birds have become increasingly aggressive, with growing documentation of attacks on newborn animals, sick or weakened animals, and those in the process of birthing. Livestock producers report severe injuries—including plucked eyes, disembowelment, and removal of organs—that result in livestock loss and prolonged suffering.

USDA Wildlife Services (USDA WS) has already verified significant livestock losses attributed to black vultures in Missouri, valuing reported cattle depredation alone at nearly \$190,000 between March 2023 and May 2025. Because this figure only captures reported and verified cases, true losses are almost certainly far greater. The emotional toll is severe—families who care for livestock as part of their livelihood are forced to witness preventable suffering and death among the animals they are committed to stewarding. This growing burden highlights an urgent need for more effective tools to protect livestock from a federally protected predator.

Livestock producers urgently need practical operational intervention to address black vulture depredation. Since 2021, Missouri Farm Bureau has held a statewide black vulture depredation permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, enabling MOFB to issue no-cost, application-based sub-permits to affected livestock producers. Nearly 975 producers have received permits, representing an excess of 9,750 authorized “takes” with sub-permit allotments, yet only 331 black vulture dispatches have been reported. In addition to the birds’ flight behavior and rapid learning proving difficult when attempting to legally dispatch black vultures, reporting requirements can be burdensome for livestock producers attempting to protect their animals and fulfill the multitude of regulatory and legal obligations already required of them.

Ultimately, we support removing protections for black vultures under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Until those protections are voided, we oppose burdensome permitting requirements that limit livestock producers’ ability to protect their animals from a well-documented predator. In the interim, we support MOFB’s Black Vulture Depredation Sub Permit program and urge continued, targeted mitigation efforts by USDA WS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Wildlife damage management should not fall solely on landowners when federal protections restrict their ability to respond.

Thank you for calling attention to this growing problem in your hearing *Oversight of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act*. If you have any questions about these priority issues please contact Spencer Tuma, Director of National Legislative Programs, or me at (573) 893-1402. Your team can reach Spencer directly at spencer.tuma@mofb.org or (573) 893-1408.

Sincerely,

Garrett Hawkins
President