



June 15, 2022

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman
Chair
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, & Wildlife
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cliff Bentz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, & Wildlife
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairs Grijalva and Huffman, and Ranking Members Westerman and Bentz:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) oppose H.R. 7398, the Prohibit Wildlife Killing Contests Act of 2022.

Our opposition to the bill is rooted in our commitment to responsible conservation of our nation's landscapes and to ensuring that these lands can support multiple uses and multiple wildlife and livestock species. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the ranchers who hold roughly 22,000 federal grazing permits and operate on federal lands. NCBA is the U.S. cattle industry's oldest and largest national trade association, representing 44 state affiliate organizations and roughly 26,000 individual producers who provide much of the nation's food supply and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

Hunting contests are just one of many tools that states regulate and administer in order to manage predator species, and they should remain under state control. Land and wildlife managers at the state and local level are the best authorities on how to manage species. Instead of making decisions from a desk in Washington, they know firsthand how the overpopulation of predator species can place enormous stress on livestock, other wildlife, and residents of rural communities. In addition to the economic burden incurred by depredation, predators can cause prolonged stress that fundamentally alters animal behavior and results in an additional financial loss due to poor weight gain, weight loss, failed pregnancies, and more.

Hunting contests are not a significant factor in the decline of predator species. In fact, many of the species targeted by these legal activities are overpopulated. Coyotes can be found in every state except Hawai'i and from Texas to Montana, prairie dog towns are visible in mile after mile of pastureland. These warrens degrade the soil, increase erosion, and weaken the native grasslands ecosystem.

States should be allowed to utilize contests where their science, community input, and land management goals deem necessary. Wildlife management lies under the rightful jurisdiction of state fish and game agencies, who are experts in managing populations across a variety of landscapes. One-size-fits-all directives are not effective when it comes to balancing multiple uses on our public lands. A flexible approach is key to maintaining healthy habitat for wildlife, as well as respecting the agricultural activities that form the backbone of countless rural communities across America. We urge a No vote on H.R. 7398.

Sincerely,

National Cattlemen's Beef Association
Public Lands Council