

RESOLUTION NO. ____

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SISKIYOU PROCLAIMING A
LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO THE PRESENCE AND IMPACT OF GRAY WOLVES IN SISKIYOU
COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance of wildlife conservation and balanced environmental stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the return and continued expansion of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) into Northern California has resulted in significant adverse impacts on rural communities and livestock producers, including hundreds of confirmed depredations in Siskiyou and neighboring counties; and

WHEREAS, across Northern California, there have been documented incidents of wolves preying on livestock near homes, highways, and public rest areas, raising growing concerns about public safety in rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the Siskiyou County Department of Agriculture continues to monitor and investigate wolf depredations within the county, with 152 confirmed or probable cases recorded since 2021; and

WHEREAS, these figures are considered a substantial undercount, as carcasses can be difficult to locate in Siskiyou County's rugged terrain, and by the time remains are found, they are often too heavily scavenged to determine cause of death; and

WHEREAS, calves and yearlings are particularly susceptible to depredation, and in many cases only small remains, such as a jawbone, are recovered, leaving insufficient evidence to determine the cause of death; and

WHEREAS, the alpha female of the Whaleback Pack, which dens in Siskiyou County, produced 10 pups in 2025, bringing her total number of pups produced since 2021 to 41; and, although not all pups are expected to survive to adulthood, these litter sizes demonstrate significant population growth potential, and wolf-related impacts on livestock and ranching operations are likely to increase in scope and intensity in the coming years; and

WHEREAS, the continued presence of gray wolves in and around Siskiyou County, combined with wolf pack population growth and escalating livestock conflicts, poses an ongoing threat to livestock and public safety, while also imposing severe human health and safety impacts on livestock producers, including emotional trauma, extreme and unsustainable labor demands associated with protecting their herds, and substantial and recurring economic losses resulting from repeated wolf depredation; and

WHEREAS, in addition to direct depredations on livestock, wolves cause indirect economic impacts, including disrupted grazing patterns, reduced weight gain, and lower reproductive success, creating substantial challenges for local family operations and requiring ranchers to adjust practices to avoid wolf activity, thereby increasing operational costs and compounding existing economic losses; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, four Siskiyou County ranchers relocated their cattle from summer rangeland near Butte Creek to winter rangeland six weeks early to avoid potential depredation incidents, a move that cost the ranchers tens of thousands of dollars, and as livestock producers begin turning cattle out to summer pasture for the 2026 grazing season, concerns regarding wolf depredation and related economic impacts continue to grow; and

WHEREAS, some ranchers operate under conservation easements where cattle grazing is an essential component of the land management plan, and the inability to graze due to wolf activity places these landowners at risk of violating contractual obligations while simultaneously increasing fire danger due to the buildup of unmanaged vegetation; and

WHEREAS, these combined direct and indirect impacts threaten the long-term viability of ranching in Siskiyou County, a cornerstone of the local agricultural economy, and create broader economic consequences throughout the county, which already faces unemployment and poverty rates higher than the state and federal averages; and

WHEREAS, the increase in gray wolf populations in the region has led to higher predation on big game ungulate species such as deer and elk, contributing to localized declines that may disrupt ecological balance and reduce hunting opportunities for local residents and visiting hunters, an important source of cultural and economic value for rural communities; and

WHEREAS, the Siskiyou County Department of Agriculture has reported an increase in coyote-caused livestock losses, as safety precautions associated with wolf habitat have significantly restricted the use of traditional coyote control methods; and

WHEREAS, the legal protections afforded to the gray wolf under both state and federal law have created a significant imbalance, whereby rural residents, livestock producers, and recreationists have little to no recourse to protect property, livelihoods, or personal safety without risking criminal or civil penalties; and

WHEREAS, in 2025, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, with authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lawfully lethally removed wolves from Sierra Valley after documenting repeated confirmed livestock depredations, substantial economic loss to local producers, and the failure of available non-lethal deterrents; and

WHEREAS, current California law provides legal avenues for the lethal removal of specific apex predators, including black bears and mountain lions, when such animals pose an imminent threat to public safety or have been confirmed to have killed livestock; similar authority should likewise be extended to allow the lawful removal of gray wolves that demonstrate hazardous, habituated behavior or that are confirmed to be habitual livestock-killers; and

WHEREAS, empowering local officials, specifically county Sheriffs and Agricultural Commissioners, to assess and respond to specific wildlife threats provides a responsible, accountable, and community-based approach to managing these risks; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors hereby declares a Local State of Emergency due to the public safety risks, the significant economic losses, and the severe adverse human health and safety impacts on livestock producers resulting from the increasing presence and ongoing depredation activity of gray wolves in and around Siskiyou County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board respectfully requests that the California Fish and Game Commission, in coordination with the Governor of California and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, initiate immediate regulatory changes recognizing that the Siskiyou County Sheriff and the Siskiyou County Agricultural Commissioner possess the authority to investigate suspected wolf depredations, document and confirm livestock kills, and provide an official determination that a specific, identified wolf is a habituated livestock depredator; and that such determinations shall be formally considered in authorizing the removal of that animal under clear, lawful, and transparent procedures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board respectfully requests that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in coordination with the President, initiate immediate regulatory changes formally recognizing that the Siskiyou County Sheriff and the Siskiyou County Agricultural Commissioner possess the authority to investigate suspected wolf depredations, document and confirm livestock kills, and make an official determination that a specific, identified gray wolf is a habituated livestock depredator and public safety threat; and that such determinations shall be directly considered in authorizing the removal of that animal under clearly defined, lawful procedures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution is not a call for widespread lethal control, but a request for the establishment of reasonable, focused tools that allow rural communities to respond to legitimate threats in a responsible and lawful manner; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Siskiyou requests immediate intervention from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to address this rapidly escalating emergency, including: launching a summer strike team in Siskiyou County to provide direct support to impacted producers and help protect livestock on public lands, and on private lands only by landowner authorization; providing funding to Siskiyou County to investigate depredations and coordinate data sharing; providing daily GPS location data within a 1-mile radius and increasing GPS collar position reporting frequency to 1-hour intervals to allow for timely discovery of depredations; providing wolf collar radio telemetry frequencies so producers can proactively protect their livestock from nearby wolves, with frequencies increased and maintained at higher levels; reducing blackout areas near den sites to a 3-mile radius; and ensuring prompt review of depredation reports and timely compensation for affected ranchers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the Board is directed to agendize the Board's review of the need for continuing this local emergency at least once every 60 days until the Board otherwise takes action to terminate this local emergency.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors at a regular meeting of said Board, held on the 19th day of May 2026, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Ray A Haupt, Chair
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

LAURA BYNUM, COUNTY CLERK

By _____ Deputy