

C5 Approve a letter to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a resolution declaring a local state of emergency due to the increasing presence and depredation of gray wolves in Shasta County (Sponsored by Supervisor Harmon).

STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE:

May 13, 2025

CATEGORY:

Consent Calendar 5

SUBJECT:

Approve a letter to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and approve a resolution declaring a local state of emergency due to the increasing presence and depredation of gray wolves in Shasta County (Sponsored by Supervisor Harmon).

DEPARTMENT:

Board of Supervisors

SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT #:

All

DEPARTMENT CONTACT:

Corkey Harmon, District 3 Supervisor, (530) 225-5557

STAFF REPORT APPROVED BY:

Stewart Buettell, Deputy County Executive Officer

Vote Required?

Simple Majority Vote

General Fund Impact?

No Additional General Fund Impact

RECOMMENDATION

Approve a letter to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and approve a resolution declaring a local state of emergency due to the increasing presence and depredation of gray wolves in Shasta County.

DISCUSSION

Similar states of emergency have been declared in Sierra, Lassen, and Modoc counties regarding the increasing presence and depredation of gray wolves. Those same counties have also engaged with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in an effort to find alternative means of deterring the wolves to protect public safety, property, and livestock.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose not to send the letter, not declare a state of emergency, or defer consideration to a future date.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

County Counsel has approved the resolution as to form. The Recommendation has been reviewed by the County Administrative Office.

FISCAL IMPACT

Costs associated with drafting and sending a letter and resolution have been included in the Clerk of the Board Budget (BU 103) for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

ATTACHMENTS:

- 1: Draft Letter to CDFW
- 2: Draft Resolution

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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KEVIN W. CRYE, DISTRICT 1
ALLEN LONG, DISTRICT 2
CORKEY HARMON, DISTRICT 3
MATT PLUMMER, DISTRICT 4
CHRIS KELSTROM, DISTRICT 5

May 13, 2025

Director Charlton H. Bonham
California Fish and Wildlife
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244

RE: Gray wolves in Shasta County Threatening Public Safety, Livestock, and Property

Dear Director Bonham:

On behalf of the Shasta County Board of Supervisors (Board), I write to express our growing concern regarding the emergence and proliferation of gray wolves in eastern Shasta County. These wolves, which show no regard for human presence or basic deterrence measures, have already killed livestock, threatened local agriculture, and members of our ranching community.

Neighboring counties, including Lassen, Modoc, and Sierra, have declared states of emergency regarding these same wolves and the threat they pose to those respective jurisdictions, including territories within Shasta County.

Consistent with the goals stated in the 2016 gray wolf conservation plan, the Board requests the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) assist ranchers and members of the public in every way possible to protect their livestock, property, and personal safety in the burgeoning presence of wolves.

Even if CDFW allows new and more assertive hazing tactics that may be helpful, the Board believes more aggressive action may be necessary. Based on local observations, the Board further posits that wolves are proliferating faster than CDFW is willing to admit, endangering both livestock and members of the public in the most rural areas of the state.

Shasta County requests the direct intervention of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to relocate problem wolves to prevent livestock losses, collaborate with local property owners to legally protect their children, livestock, and property, and continue to actively monitor the status and proliferation of wolves throughout northern California, and has declared a state of emergency in solidarity with our neighboring rural counties.

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We appreciate CDFW's time and attention on this important topic.

Sincerely,

Kevin W. Crye, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of Shasta

cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Senator Megan Dahle
Assemblymember Heather Hadwick
County of Lassen, Board of Supervisors
County of Modoc, Board of Supervisors
County of Sierra, Board of Supervisors
Shaw, Yoder, Antwih, Schmelzer & Lange

RESOLUTION NO. 2025-XXX

**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SHASTA
DECLARING A LOCAL STATE OF EMERGENCY
DUE TO A SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO PUBLIC SAFETY FROM THE PRESENCE
AND IMPACT OF GRAY WOLVES IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO RURAL RESIDENTS**

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

WHEREAS, the reintroduction and continued expansion of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) to Northern California has resulted in significant adverse impacts on rural communities and livestock producers, including confirmed depredations in Shasta, Plumas, Lassen, Siskiyou, and Modoc Counties; and

WHEREAS, since December 2024, Shasta County livestock producers have reported the loss of multiple cattle and other livestock to wolf attacks. DNA tests have confirmed that gray wolves were responsible for a number of these losses, with additional incidents under investigation. These attacks have occurred near rural residences, posing a significant threat to public safety; and

WHEREAS, these wolves have shown a lack of fear toward humans, attacking livestock near homes where families with children are present. Recent attacks have demonstrated that the wolves have killed livestock without feeding on them, indicating behavior that poses a danger beyond simple predation. This creates an imminent threat to local livestock producers and the families living and working on affected rural properties; and

WHEREAS, no effective means currently exist to protect the public or livestock from these wolves, leading to concerns that without timely, practical, and locally informed solutions, individuals may feel compelled to take unregulated actions to protect their property and safety, jeopardizing themselves, their neighbors, and eroding public trust; and

WHEREAS, the County of Shasta finds the following threats to public safety:

Extreme peril to the safety of persons and property has arisen due to the presence of gray wolves posing an emergent threat to public safety; and

Persistent wolf attacks have led to devastating losses for livestock producers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Shasta proclaims that a Local State of Emergency exists throughout Shasta County due to a significant threat to public safety caused by depredation from gray wolves in close proximity to rural residents within the County of Shasta.

Resolution No. 2025-XXX

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Shasta that Shasta County requests the intervention of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Services to address this rapidly evolving issue. Authorities are urged to consider euthanizing or relocating problem wolves to prevent further livestock losses and ensure the safety of the general public in affected communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Shasta duly authorizes and fully supports any and all actions deemed necessary by the Shasta County Sheriff to mitigate and resolve this threat, including use of force to protect life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board respectfully requests 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 to grant sheriffs the authority to investigate wolf incidents and declare a public safety threat, thereby authorizing removal of specific wolves under clearly defined and lawful procedures; and

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED this 13th day of May 2025, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Shasta by the following vote:

AYES: X
NOES: X
ABSENT: X
ABSTAIN: X
RECUSE: X

KEVIN W. CRYE, CHAIR
Board of Supervisors
County of Shasta
State of California

ATTEST:

DAVID J. RICKERT
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
JOSEPH LARMOUR
County Counsel

By: _____
Deputy

By: _____
Signed by:
Joseph Larmour
64C207C8800F414...