

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 30, 2012

Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 200-A
Washington DC, 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

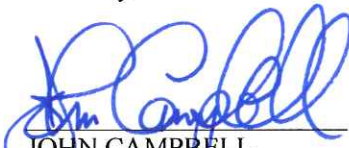
We are writing to request a thorough audit of Wildlife Services, especially its lethal predator control program, by the USDA Office of Inspector General (OIG) regarding the culture within Wildlife Services.

As you know, recent news reports indicate that Jamie P. Olson, a Wildlife Services employee working in Wyoming, may have apparently committed acts of animal cruelty that appear to violate Wildlife Services' Directives and Wyoming state law¹. If it is found that Mr. Olson committed these acts, it would bring disrepute to the Wildlife Services' program and the federal government at a time when Wildlife Services, and in particular its lethal control of predators to protect livestock, labors under heavy criticism for unnecessarily killing wild animals and lacking transparency and accountability. We urge you to be thorough in your investigation because these alleged acts clearly violate standards of human decency.

However, we are gravely concerned that photographs, published on Mr. Olson's Facebook in an album labeled "work" and since removed, do not represent an isolated occurrence, but may reflect a deep-rooted problem within the Wildlife Services program that allows for, and encourages, inhumane lethal methods of predator control. According to a recent Sacramento Bee article, Gary Strader, a former Wildlife Services trapper in Nevada, "was not surprised to learn about the controversial photos. 'That is very common,' Strader wrote in an email." (Tom Knudson, U.S. wildlife worker's online photos of animal abuse stir outrage. Sacramento Bee, Friday, November 2, 2012).

We look forward to seeing the results of your investigation, and thank you for your attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,


JOHN CAMPBELL
Member of Congress


PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress

CC: USDA IG

¹ Wildlife Services' Directive 2.450 instruct employees that "[t]arget animals captured in direct control projects *will be dispatched immediately*, removed from capture devices, and properly disposed ..." (emphasis added). Clearly, Mr. Olson did not dispatch the unfortunate coyote immediately, or even quickly, when he allowed his dogs to tear her apart.

Wildlife Services' Directive 2.505 states "WS personnel will *exhibit a high level of respect and professionalism when taking an animal's life*, regardless of method. WS personnel will be familiar with the methods described in the current AVMA Guidelines for Euthanasia, and *those methods will be used* to euthanize captured or restrained animals..." (emphasis added). Mr. Olson failed to exhibit any respect or professionalism when taking this coyote's life and obviously the method used (dismemberment by dogs) is not in the AVMA Guidelines.

Wildlife Services' Directive 2.210 states "[a]ll employees (Federal and non-Federal) are responsible for conducting official duties in *compliance with all Federal laws, and also applicable State*, and local laws ..." (emphasis added). The failure to immediately remove a predatory animal from a trap appears to be unlawful under Section 23-2-303(d) of the Wyoming code.