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Press Release

Wildlife advocacy group calls on the Environmental Protection Agency for:

- **an immediate moratorium on cyanide devices and**
- **a criminal investigation of human poisoning by these devices used to kill coyotes and other predator mammals**

Predator Defense, a national wildlife advocacy group based in Eugene, OR confronts the U.S. Government on its use of a deadly poisoning device called the M-44.

Today Predator Defense contacted Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Stephen Johnson demanding a criminal investigation of a human poisoning by an M-44, a device that ejects cyanide and is commonly used to kill coyotes. The group is also making an urgent request for an immediate moratorium on the deadly M-44 device.

Intended to kill coyotes, M-44s are not selective as they cannot distinguish between species and kill dogs and other nontarget animals. And they harm people. Brooks Fahy, Executive Director of Predator Defense equates M-44s with landmines and asserts, "It's only a matter of time before a person is killed".

While illegal for use by the public in most states, including Utah, M-44s are commonly used to kill coyotes by Wildlife Services, a government entity that falls under the authority of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

Registered for use by the EPA, the agency has the authority to pull any registration that violates the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The act requires Wildlife Services to report incidents of human poisoning to the EPA within 15 days. While Wildlife Services has acknowledged over 20 cases of US government trappers accidentally poisoned with M-44s, they have made no reports of poisonings of the public. However, in 2003 a man was injured by an M-44 on public lands in Utah. To date, he is still suffering from effects of the poison. Wildlife Services continues to deny responsibility for setting the M-44.

According to Sander Orent, M.D., who is board certified in Occupational and Environmental Medicine and Internal Medicine, and currently Medical Director of Arbor Occupational Medicine in Boulder, CO. "Cyanide is unquestionably one of the most lethal poisons known to man. Its toxicity is legion. The concept of placing explosive cartridges loaded with this substance on or near public land is at best extremely foolish and dangerous to humans, pets, livestock and all wildlife, and at worst a gross violation of the public trust and the concept of public health. I would urge the immediate banning of these devices."

Fahy has documented numerous cases where M-44s have been set in close proximity to homes with children and pets. In one such case, in Estacada, OR, children played within several feet of an M-44 that was set within a hundred yards of homes. Fahy asserts, "It is inconceivable that the government continues to use these devices when we know of at least two dozen near-fatal accidents."

In 1994 Amanda Wood contacted the organization seeking help when her dog died from an M-44 that was illegally set on her property. Ms. Wood also suffered secondary poisoning as she tried to save her pet from an agonizing death. Although Ms. Wood reported her experience to Wildlife Services, agency records reveal no documentation of her account or a report to EPA.

For more information on M-44s, go to www.predatordefense.org; click on M-44s on menu bar.

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