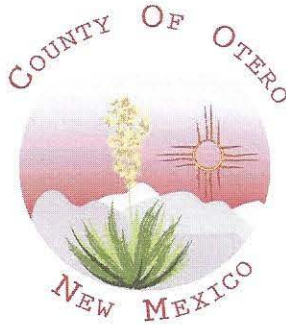


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RESOLUTION #05-08-25/113-70

A Resolution by the Otero County Board of County Commissioners Opposing The New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program

WHEREAS, the Otero County Board of County Commissioners recognizes the importance of wildlife conservation and the need to protect endangered species, including the Mexican wolf (*Canis lupus baileyi*); and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program, administered by federal and state agencies, aims to reintroduce and manage the population of Mexican wolves in the wild within the states of New Mexico and Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the Board acknowledges that the presence of Mexican wolves has led to significant challenges for the residents, ranchers, and agricultural communities of Otero County and surrounding areas, including predation on livestock, threats to public safety, and restrictions on land use; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of livestock losses due to wolf predation has placed an undue financial burden on ranchers and farmers, threatening the viability of agricultural operations that are essential to local economies and vital to national security in the context of local food supply chains; and

WHEREAS, the reintroduction of Mexican wolves into western New Mexico and eastern Arizona has resulted in devastating losses for ranchers in those

regions, including the killing of cattle and horses, as well as heightened risks to children and pets, causing undue mental stress and economic harm; and

WHEREAS, the Otero County Cattleman's Association (OCCA), representing livestock producers in Otero County, many of whom operate on the Lincoln National Forest, has expressed grave concerns about proposals to introduce wolves into the Lincoln National Forest to "control" the elk population, as well as the broader impacts of the Mexican Wolf Program on the safety and livelihoods of local ranchers; and

WHEREAS, ranching is a critical component of Otero County's economy and heritage, providing not only food but also multiple everyday products derived from livestock, and it is unconscionable to prioritize the reintroduction of predatory animals over the safety and welfare of the county's citizens and their livelihoods; and

WHEREAS, the emotional toll on ranchers who have witnessed their livestock—animals they have raised and cared for—being needlessly tortured and killed by wolves is profound, leading to both economic devastation and personal anguish, as well as the waste of nutritious food and other valuable resources that could contribute to human use; and

WHEREAS, there have been documented instances of wolves posing threats to residential areas, raising legitimate concerns about the safety of residents, particularly children and pets; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of the Mexican Wolf Program has, in some cases, infringed upon the private property rights of landowners by imposing restrictions on land management practices without adequate compensation or local input; and

WHEREAS, the Board believes that wildlife management decisions, particularly those affecting local communities, should be made with meaningful involvement from local stakeholders, including ranchers, farmers, property owners, and

residents, to ensure that their perspectives and needs are adequately considered; and

WHEREAS, while the Board supports conservation efforts, it is concerned that the current approach to the Mexican Wolf Program may disrupt the ecological balance by negatively impacting other wildlife species and the overall health of the ecosystem in Otero County; and

WHEREAS, the Board affirms its full resolve behind Otero County Ordinance Number 14-04 which states “it shall be unlawful to import for release into the wild, or release into the wild, within Otero County or into the adjacent region surrounding Otero County predatory animals of the genera *Canis lupus*, including *Canis lupus baileyi* (e.g., Mexican wolf and/or Southwestern wolf), *Ursus* (e.g., grizzly bear) and *Felis* (e.g., jaguar).”

WHEREAS, the Board asserts that the current structure of the New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program does not sufficiently address the aforementioned concerns, nor does it provide adequate mechanisms for local input or mitigation of adverse impacts on the community; and

WHEREAS, the Otero County Cattleman’s Association called for the New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program to be defunded to stop the senseless killing of livestock—i.e., food—and the ruination of families’ lives and livelihoods, emphasizing that the insanity of putting animals before people must end.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Otero County Board of County Commissioners that:

1. The Board hereby expresses its strong opposition to the New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program in its current form due to the significant negative impacts on the economy, public safety, property rights, and ecological balance of Otero County, New Mexico, and Arizona, as well as the devastating effects on ranchers and their families.

2. The Board calls for an immediate moratorium on the release of additional Mexican wolves into the wild within Otero County, the Lincoln National Forest, and surrounding areas until a comprehensive, independent study can be conducted to assess the full impact of the program on local communities, economies, and ecosystems.
3. The Board encourages the Otero County Sheriff to strictly enforce Otero County Ordinance 14-04.
4. The Board urges the defunding of the New Mexico/Arizona Mexican Wolf Program to prevent further harm to livestock, ranchers, and the broader community, and to prioritize the safety and welfare of Otero County's citizens over the reintroduction of predatory animals.
5. The Board supports the establishment of a local advisory committee, composed of Otero County residents, ranchers, farmers, and other stakeholders, to provide direct input into any future wildlife management decisions affecting the county, ensuring that local voices are heard and respected.
6. The Board requests that federal and state agencies increase funding and support for programs that provide fair and timely compensation to ranchers and farmers for livestock losses caused by wolf predation, recognizing the critical role of ranching in the local and national economy.
7. The Board advocates for enhanced public education initiatives to inform residents about wolf behavior, safety precautions, and non-lethal methods of deterring wolves from residential and agricultural areas.
8. The Board encourages federal and state agencies to collaborate with local governments and stakeholders to develop a more balanced and sustainable approach to Mexican wolf management that prioritizes both conservation goals and the needs of the affected communities, particularly the protection of livestock and the livelihoods of ranchers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Otero County Board of County Commissioners directs the County Manager to transmit copies of this resolution to the Governor of New Mexico, the New Mexico Congressional Delegation, the Arizona Congressional Delegation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Interior, and other relevant federal and state agencies involved in the Mexican Wolf Program.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 8th day of May, 2025.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF OTERO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**



Vickie Marquardt, Chairwoman



Gerald Matherly, Vice Chairman

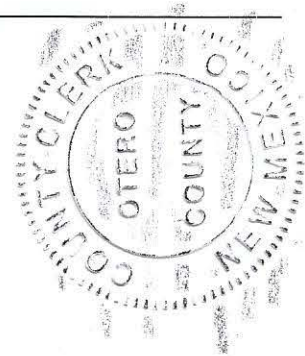


Amy Barela, Member

ATTEST:



Selina Maes, County Clerk



Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:



R. B. Nichols, County Attorney