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OF THE UNITED STATES**

May 7, 2012

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

RE: Request to investigate the Wildlife Services Program and make much needed reforms, including banning the use of sodium cyanide and Compound 1080

I am sure you have seen the recent series by the *Sacramento Bee*¹ newspaper on the USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services program, based on Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Tom Knudson's year-long investigation. We have discussed with you and USDA staff in the past our concerns with Wildlife Services' current approach, particularly the continued use of sodium cyanide and Compound 1080 for lethal predator control, and the lack of balance between lethal and non-lethal management. In light of the new information brought to light by the Sacramento Bee series, which "found the agency's practices to be indiscriminate, at odds with science, inhumane and sometimes illegal," we are again writing to bring this issue to your attention and urge you to take definite and timely action to turn around some of the problems with this program.

The *Sacramento Bee* reporter uncovered many serious problems with Wildlife Services' program. It is particularly troubling that employees report a culture of hiding non-target animals killed, especially considering the agency requirements for reporting those kills. These employee reports call into question the program's published data reports and its claims about the actual impacts of its program on non-target animals. We encourage you to investigate these allegations, especially because of the Administration's stated commitment to transparency and government responsibility.

¹ *The killing agency: Wildlife Services' brutal methods leave a trail of animal death*, Saturday, April 28, 2012, <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/28/4450678/the-killing-agency-wildlife-services.html>, *Wildlife Services' deadly force opens Pandora's box of environmental problems*, Monday April 20, 2012, <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/04/30/v-print/4452212/wildlife-services-deadly-force.html> and, *Suggestions in changing Wildlife Services range from new practices to outright bans*, Sunday, May 6, 2012, <http://www.sacbee.com/2012/05/06/v-print/4469067/suggestions-in-changing-wildlife.html>.