

Clark County Commission Approves Resolution to Condemn Wildlife Killing Contests

LAS VEGAS , NEVADA , USA , March 2, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, the Clark County Commission voted to approve a resolution to condemn Wildlife Killing Contests in Nevada. The resolution, brought forth by Commissioner Justin Jones, passed by a unanimous vote of 7 to 0.

“With the passage of this historic resolution to condemn the scourge of Wildlife Killing Contests in our state, Nevada has been put on the path toward joining the bevy of other states that have already eliminated these barbaric practices,” Annoula Wylderich, Animal Wellness Action’s Nevada State Director, said. “This resolution galvanizes the movement to ban contest killing, which rewards participants for killing the most, the heaviest, and the smallest of a given species and is not sportsmanship.”



Wildlife Killing Contest

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Shelbie Swartz, wildlife advocate with Animal Wellness Action

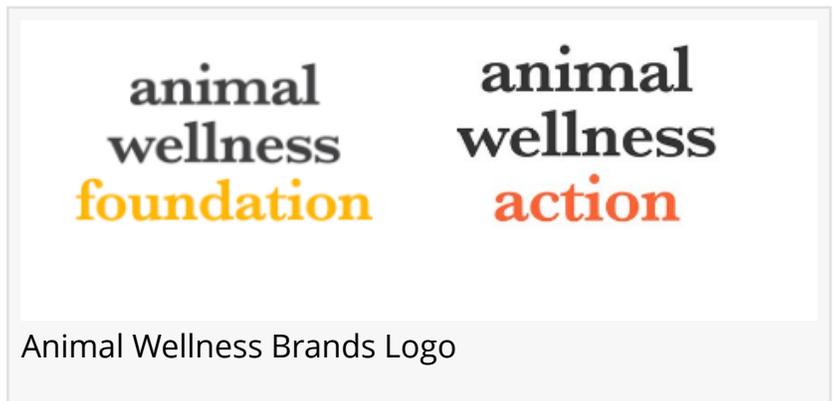
“With this vote, the Clark County Commission took a leap forward to protect residents and visitors to our state who use our extensive public lands for hiking, rock climbing, and other outdoor activities that require a healthy environment,” Shelbie Swartz, a wildlife advocate working with Animal Wellness Action, said. “As a Nevadan, I believe it is my responsibility, and the responsibility of all my neighbors, to stand up for our wildlife and our lands. These contests are cruel, not representative of ethical hunting, not conservation, and not a recognized wildlife

management tool.”

“With this resolution, we send a signal to the Nevada Department of Wildlife that Clark County, the most populous county in Nevada, stands against cruel killing contests, and uphold scientifically-based wildlife management programs,”

Commissioner Jones said. “I am proud to have sponsored this resolution,

which will help to ensure that the public is safe from stray bullets by unethical shooters in a hurry to kill as many animals as possible and protect our state’s wildlife from inhumane practices and unnecessary slaughter.”



“Nature abhors a vacuum, which is precisely what people foolishly cause with wildlife killing contests. Indiscriminate slaughter of our wildlife never makes biological or ethical sense. The Clark County Commission officially recognized these realities with its vote today,” Fred Voltz, a Nevada wildlife advocate said.

The AWA-sponsored measure also earned support from the Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter and the Center for Biological Diversity.

“Wildlife killing contests are a barbaric anachronism that has no place in a civilized society,” Patrick Donnelly, Nevada state director at the Center for Biological Diversity, said. “Coyote killing contests in particular throw off the pack dynamics and reproductive ecology of coyotes. There is no evidence that killing coyotes in any way reduces human conflict or livestock depredation. We need to show respect for our native wildlife, not treat it as fodder in some sick bloodsport. Nevada needs to join the 21st century and end this practice today.”

“One of the key missions of the Sierra Club is the preservation and protection of our nation’s wildlife resources and nothing is more antithetical to this goal than killing contests that glorify the killing of animals purely for blood sport with the intention of seeing who can kill the most,” Connie Howard, Sierra Club Toiyabe Chapter’s Conservation and Public Lands Chair, wrote in a letter of support. “These contests should be outlawed across the nation, regardless of species (coyote, bobcat, foxes, wolves, prairie dogs etc.), and we support this resolution as an important step in the right direction.”

“This barbaric practice of coyote killing contests is not only ineffective due to the coyote’s compensatory breeding response, but also a repulsive stain on Nevada as long as this practice is allowed to continue,” Tobi Tyler, a member of Toiyabe Chapter’s Executive Committee, said.

“These animals perform a critical ecological function. When are we, as a species, going to learn to coexist with other top predators instead of trying to kill them all off, especially in a manner that’s purely for entertainment? This ecologically destructive practice must end.”

Nevada's neighboring states have banned these contests in recent years, which has driven contest participants and organizers to flock to Nevada, one of the last states in the Southwest that allows these contests to persist. In these contests, teams of two or single shooters head out at dawn to kill as many coyotes, fox, rabbits, bobcats, or other small mammals as they can, to win prizes such as belt buckles, guns, or monetary awards. They typically throw away the animals and leave lead ammunition strewn on public lands for other wildlife to ingest. The spent lead ammunition courses through the food chain, poisoning and killing abundant and endangered wildlife alike.

In the past few years, more than 24 wildlife killing contests have occurred in Nevada, including in and around Clark County, with four hosting their weigh-ins and "celebrations" in Las Vegas and Henderson. The killing happens across the entire state, with participants encouraged to kill on public lands such as BLM and USFS lands. Recently, competitions have migrated to an app-based system where a virtual check-in system allows for "anyone with a smartphone" to compete, allowing killing to occur anywhere.

This is the first successful attempt to condemn these contests in the state of Nevada. In 2015, the Wildlife Commission voted 7-1 to deny a petition that sought to end these competitions. However, support for banning these contests has grown on the commission, with Wildlife Commission member David McNinch stating in an interview to the Nevada Current that he doesn't "think it's in the best interest of our agency or our wildlife to be known as the only state that allows it."

Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation (Foundation) is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Marty Irby
Animal Wellness Action
+1 202-821-5686

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