

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors Votes to Regulate Rooster Population, Curtailing Cockfighting Cruelty, Crimes

Animal Wellness Action applauded the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors for affirming its recent vote of 4-1 to rein in illegal cockfighting

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, January 23, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Animal Wellness Action](#) applauded the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors for affirming its recent vote of 4-1 to

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Wayne Pacelle, Animal Wellness Action

rein in illegal cockfighting breeding operations in the sprawling county.

The vote on the original consideration was 4-1, with Supervisors Joan Hartman, Laura Capps, Das Williams, and Chairman Steve Lavagnino favoring the measure. The second vote on the issue, to make the measure final, was identical. Santa Barbara joins 18 other counties in the state with similar ordinances, including Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura.

The ordinance, initiated by Supervisor Hartman and supported by Animal Wellness Action and recommended by the County Agricultural Advisory Committee, introduces regulations based on property size in unincorporated areas. It limits the number of roosters to five for non-permitted property owners, emphasizing the need to protect the tranquility of residential areas and to curb rampant illegal cockfighting activities that pose a threat to both public safety and legitimate agricultural practices. There are exemptions for legitimate agricultural operations.

“The Board of Supervisors saw through the ruse by cockfighters to cast themselves as poultry show enthusiasts and gamefowl hobbyists,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the [Center for a Humane Economy](#). “In adopting this ordinance, the Supervisors stood for safer and healthier communities and worked against the barbaric cruelty of cockfighting.”

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Pacelle, who testified for the ordinance at today's hearing.

At the original legislative proceeding, Eric Sakach, a court-certified national expert on cockfighting with Animal Wellness Action, and Dr. Tom Pool, a retired Army Colonel and former commander of the U.S. Army Veterinary Command and former Territorial Veterinarian for Guam, provided expert testimony in favor of the measure. Two other veterinarians with Animal Wellness Action and the Animal Welfare Foundation also submitted letters in support.

Division Chief Lars Seifert and Animal Services Director Sarah Aguilar highlighted the value of the ordinance during the first public hearing. "Limiting the number of roosters on a single premise protects the health and safety of the county's residents and the quiet enjoyment of their homes by minimizing public nuisances, illegal cockfighting, and the raising of birds used for cockfighting," she stated during the hearing. The county's Agriculture Advisory Committee also favored the measure.

Under the proposed ordinance, specific guidelines and penalties for violating the provisions have been delineated. The regulations offer exceptions for agricultural students' projects and provisions for obtaining permits to keep higher numbers of roosters under stringent guidelines. Violations of the ordinance would be treated as infractions, with fines up to \$500 and potential civil proceedings to ensure compliance.

Animal Wellness Action has conducted extensive investigations of cockfighting in California, uncovering that thousands of birds are raised in California and annually shipped to Guam, the Philippines, and other Pacific Rim jurisdictions. While state and federal anti-cockfighting laws are strong, enforcement is weak and the counties have a critical role to play in not allowing major cockfighting breeding farms to operate until false pretenses.

"If Santa Barbara didn't take this action, we would continue to see more cockfighting operations set up in that jurisdiction, precisely because other nearby counties forbid cockfighters from raising large numbers of roosters," added Mr. Pacelle. "Supervisor Hartmann deserves praise for leading this fight, and we thank Chairman Lavagnino and Supervisors Capps and Williams for supporting it."

Former U.S. Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-Simi Valley) represented much of Santa Barbara County for 10 years in Congress. He led federal efforts to make dogfighting and cockfighting a federal felony.

ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction_News.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to

help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter.

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