

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Chris Parlier District 2
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David Couch District 4
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Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
Kern County Administrative Center
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Bakersfield, California 93301
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July 6, 2026

The Honorable Buffy Wicks
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1305 (Richardson), Grizzly bear reintroduction roadmap – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Wicks,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our opposition to SB 1305 (Richardson), which directs the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to develop a roadmap evaluating the feasibility of reintroducing the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) to California.

While we recognize the bill's intent to examine ecological restoration concepts, Kern County has grave concerns regarding the expansion or reestablishment of large predatory wildlife populations in or near rural, agricultural regions. These concerns are grounded not in speculation, but in recent statewide experience, well-documented risks to livestock and rural communities, and the County's long-standing responsibility to safeguard the agricultural economy, public safety, and local livelihoods.

The livestock and ranching industry is fundamental to Kern County's economy, cultural identity, and rural heritage. Ranching operations support local families, maintain working landscapes, and contribute to California's food supply. The continued viability of these operations depends on livestock safety and operational predictability, conditions already strained by the return of the gray wolf to the state.

CDFW's own actions underscore the severity of this threat. In 2025, the Department made the extraordinary decision to lethally remove four wolves from a single pack after repeated predation events, despite the use of extensive non-lethal deterrents. This incident demonstrates a critical fact: once habituated to livestock, apex predators may abandon natural prey and repeatedly target ranching operations, creating persistent and escalating conflict.

Introducing an even larger apex predator compounds existing risks. The grizzly bear is larger, stronger, and more behaviorally unpredictable than the gray wolf. Reintroduction of such a species would introduce a new and significantly amplified level of risk, not only to livestock, but to ranch workers, backcountry users, and rural residents.

Predator expansion into livestock areas would pose an unacceptable risk to Kern County's agricultural economy and the stability of ranching operations, increase the likelihood of human-wildlife conflict, including threats to life and property, destabilized wildlife behavior patterns, and the potential to draw predators closer to rural communities and working landscapes. These new risks would strain state and county resources, given that existing compensation and mitigation programs remain inadequate to cover real economic losses and operational impacts.

Kern County acknowledges the importance of wildlife conservation but remains unequivocal that efforts to expand or restore predatory wildlife populations must not come at the expense of livestock protection, rural livelihoods, or public safety. For this reason, the Board has formally declared its opposition to any initiative—state or federal—that would establish or expand large predator populations within or adjacent to Kern County without adequate safeguards, clear limitations, or meaningful opt-out provisions for affected counties.

SB 1305 does not provide such assurances. Instead, it launches a process with the explicit aim of evaluating reintroduction of one of North America's largest apex predators without addressing the significant and well-documented economic, safety, and operational consequences for rural counties.

Our Board has also emphasized the necessity of including county agricultural commissioners and relevant departments in any stakeholder processes relating to predator management or wildlife expansion. Should SB 1305 move forward, it is essential that local governments, particularly those with substantial ranching interests, be formally included in all consultations and planning efforts.

However, even with such participation, the underlying risk inherent in grizzly bear reintroduction remains incompatible with the realities of Kern County's agricultural landscape. We urge the Legislature to prioritize rural public safety, agricultural stability, and practical wildlife management over speculative restoration initiatives that do not account for the real-world consequences borne by working communities.

For these reasons, the Kern County Board of Supervisors opposes this measure and respectfully urges you to vote **NO on SB 1305**.

Sincerely,



Phillip Peters, Chairman
Kern County Board of Supervisors

Enclosure: Kern County Resolution 2025-266

cc: Honorable Members, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Honorable Members, Kern Legislative Delegation
Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF KERN, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the matter of:

Resolution No. 2025-266

KERN LIVESTOCK AND RANCHING INDUSTRY AND EXPANSION OF PREDATORY WILDLIFE

I, NANCY ANDERSON, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Kern, State of California, certify that the following resolution, on motion of Supervisor Flores, seconded by Supervisor Peters, was duly passed and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Kern at a regular meeting on the 16th day of December, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: Peters, Parlier, Flores, Couch, Perez

NOES: None

ABSENT: None



NANCY ANDERSON
County Administrative Officer
Clerk of the Board


Deputy Clerk

RESOLUTION

Section 1. WHEREAS:

(a) The livestock and ranching industry are fundamental to Kern County's economy, culture, and rural heritage; sustaining families, supporting local economies, and preserving open space stewardship and food production; and

(b) The safety and security of livestock is essential for the continued viability of ranching operations in Kern County; and

(c) The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recognizes that the native gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), a large carnivore species, has returned to parts of California after nearly a century of extirpation, presenting significant risks to livestock and rural communities; and

(d) Recent events statewide, including the 2025 decision by CDFW to lethally remove four wolves from a single pack after repeated predations on cattle despite extensive non-lethal deterrent efforts, illustrate the serious and escalating threat posed by wolves to livestock and the agricultural economy; and

(e) The experience of the removed pack members demonstrates that, once habituated to livestock, wolves may abandon their natural prey in favor of easier, domesticated food sources, thereby increasing risks to ranching operations, destabilizing wildlife behavior patterns, and potentially drawing predators closer to communities and increasing the risk of human-wildlife conflict; and

(f) Kern County has historically been and continues to be heavily reliant on agriculture and ranching, industries that depend on stability and predictability, and the expansion of predatory wildlife into areas with livestock operations would pose a significant and unacceptable risk to the county's agricultural economy, public safety, and rural communities; and

(g) Existing state-level compensation and mitigation programs remain inadequate to fully offset such impacts.

Section 2. IT IS RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Kern, State of California, as follows:

1. The County of Kern unequivocally affirms that the protection of livestock, ranching operations, and rural livelihoods are top priorities for the County and they must not be compromised by efforts to restore or expand predatory wildlife populations.

2. The County of Kern formally declares that it does not support the establishment or expansion of wolf packs or other large predatory wildlife populations within or adjacent to Kern County due to the unacceptable risk to livestock, the agricultural economy, rural communities, and overall public safety.

3. The County of Kern requests that CDFW and any other relevant state or federal wildlife agencies take all available measures including, if necessary, regulatory changes to prevent wolves or similar large predators from dispersing into or inhabiting territory within Kern County and adjacent ranching districts.

4. The County of Kern requests that its Agricultural Commissioner and relevant departments be included in any stakeholder consultations, wildlife management plans, policy decisions, or regulatory changes that could affect ranching, grazing, livestock safety, or wildlife management in or near the county.

5. The County of Kern acknowledges the importance of wildlife conservation but emphasizes that public safety and the resilience of agricultural systems must take priority. Where non-lethal deterrence fails or where predator expansion threatens economic viability and community safety, options up to and including lethal removal of predatory wildlife should remain available as a lawful and approved management tool. The County supports state and federal regulatory frameworks that would accommodate such removal to protect rural communities and agricultural livelihoods and opposes any policy, regulation, or restoration initiative that jeopardizes these priorities in the name of predator recovery, unless it includes adequate safeguards, clear limitations, or opt-out provisions for affected counties.

6. The Clerk of the Board shall transmit copies of this Resolution to the following:

Charlton H. Bonham, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
715 P St., 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Julie Vance, Regional Manager (4)
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
1234 E. Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Paul Souza, Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Pacific Southwest Region Headquarters
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606
Sacramento, CA 95825

The Honorable Shannon Grove
California Senate District 12
1021 O Street, Room 7150
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Melissa Hurtado
California Senate District 16
1021 O Street, Room 6510
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Stan Ellis
California Assembly District 32
1021 O Street, Suite 5350
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Tom Lackey
California Assembly District 34
1021 O Street, Suite 5340
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Jasmeet Bains
California Assembly District 35
1021 O Street, Suite 5730
Sacramento, CA 95814

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12-19-25 -mlg