



RESOLUTION NO. 16-07-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF GILA COUNTY DECLARING THE NEED TO ADDRESS GOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES REGARDING PREDATORY ANIMALS, INCLUDING INTRODUCED, EXPERIMENTAL AND MANAGED SPECIES, INTERACTION WITH HUMANS, DOMESTICATED ANIMALS, AND LIVESTOCK

WHEREAS, the Gila County Board of Supervisors finds and determines that predatory animals, including introduced, experimental and managed species, including the Mexican wolf, may pose serious threats to human settlements, family households, expose children to health and safety risks, and threaten the economic well-being of families, ranches and businesses within the County; and,

WHEREAS, the Gila County Board of Supervisors is concerned that increased pressure from predatory animals, including introduced, experimental and managed species, has already and will continue to lead to drastic and negative impacts on big game animals throughout the western U.S.; and,

WHEREAS, many experts on introduced, experimental and managed predators, including Mexican gray wolves, indicate that habituated predators may cause greater danger to people and domesticated animals because these predators may have lost their fear of humans; and,

WHEREAS, in January 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) finalized changes to the Mexican Wolf Experimental Population Rule in Arizona and New Mexico, providing for a fourfold expansion of the area where Mexican wolves primarily are expected to occur, and a tenfold increase in the area where Mexican wolves can initially be released from captivity; and,

WHEREAS, previous documents and current rulings prepared by the USFWS and Arizona Game and Fish Department show the intent to introduce more wolves into Gila County and surrounding areas; and,

WHEREAS, the Gila County Board of Supervisors is concerned the risk of wolf and other predator attacks on humans has become more likely as predator-human incidents will increase with the expansion of wolf populations in Arizona, and that certain measures are necessary to avoid human suffering, possible loss of life, loss of income, loss and damage to private property, and disruption of the normal functioning of government and communities in Gila County; and recognize the importance to further define clear objectives to avoid harms and inconsistencies in emergency response to resident requests concerning threatening predators, including wolves; understand public education is critical to initial response, and therefore desire to provide information to all Gila County residents, including but not limited to this data provided by the USFWS: 1) Wolves are adept at determining prey vulnerability and the human victims of predatory attacks tend to be mainly children, 2) Wolves may attack a dog even when people are present and a wolf excited by the presence of a dog may be more likely to act aggressively toward people, and 3) Aggressive behaviors by wolves are often associated with habituation and food conditioning, and the wolves to be released through the USFWS wolf population expansion may be either from a facility where they are raised or from established packs; and,

WHEREAS, the Gila County Board of Supervisors desires to increase its ability to protect humans, the general well-being of humans, livestock and domesticated animals from predatory animals, including introduced, experimental and managed species; and,

WHEREAS, the cooperation and/or participation with the USFWS and other federal and state management agencies has not been sufficient thus far to adequately address the health, safety, and welfare needs of human settlements, households, residents, domesticated animals and livestock in Gila County; and,

WHEREAS, the Gila County Board of Supervisors has a fiduciary responsibility under its statutory police powers to protect the health, safety and welfare of its residents; and, the County reserves the right to take whatever actions necessary to do so;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gila County Board of Supervisors declares its obligation and intention to direct its elected officials and appointed department heads acting within their statutory authority to take appropriate action to properly protect County residents, domesticated animals and livestock from the potential harm by predatory animals, including introduced, experimental, and managed species; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution be called immediately to the attention of Arizona Governor Doug Ducey, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Congressional Delegation and the Arizona Legislature, and that meetings, as needed, be coordinated as soon as possible; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of Gila County strongly recommends that the USFWS undertake its legal obligation to fully consult with Gila County and the Arizona Game and Fish Department on any proposal to expand the wolf recovery area in the County and to coordinate any such efforts with the County law

enforcement, environmental protection, and land planning officials.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 5th day of July 2016, at Globe, Gila County, Arizona.

ATTEST:

GILA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Marian Sheppard, Clerk

Michael A. Pastor, Chairman

Approved as to form:

Jefferson R. Dalton
Deputy Gila County Attorney
Civil Bureau Chief