



United States
Department of
Agriculture

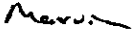
Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection Service

Wildlife Services

Louisiana State Office
P.O. Box 589
Port Allen, LA 70767
(225) 389-0229 PHONE
(866) 487-3297 TOLL FREE
(225) 389-0228 FAX

October 26, 2006

Mr. Marvin Lyons
Police Jury Association
707 N. 7th St.
Baton Rouge, LA 70802


Dear Mr. Lyons:

This letter provides information on the proposed Fiscal Year 2007 budget for the USDA APHIS Wildlife Services program. Some of our cooperators have asked for this update, which I am happy to provide. Once approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate, the 2007 budget will become effective October 1, 2006, which is the start of the Federal fiscal year. The joint House/Senate conference committee is scheduled to begin finalization of the Fiscal Year 2007 budget in preparation for the final budget vote, which will occur sometimes after November 1st.

Available information shows that the proposed Federal budget for the national Wildlife Services program will be approximately \$78.7 million, less rescission and program support costs. This represents an increase of about \$1.68 million from last year. Of the total proposed 2007 budget, approximately \$7 million has also been identified by both the House of Representatives and the Senate as directives for initiating new projects and bolstering ongoing projects throughout the nation. This would include an increase in the Louisiana blackbird/rice project in the amount of \$17,000 and \$1,000, as proposed by the House and Senate, respectively. These directives should be discussed and finalized in upcoming conference committee deliberations.

There is no indication in the proposed budget language that any new funding has been provided to conduct the new projects. Consequently, these projects would have to be funded from dollars that have been historically dedicated to other ongoing projects. As such, Wildlife Services would have to make appropriate adjustments to existing work and financial plans to meet mandates directed by the 2007 appropriations bill. Approximately \$4.6 million may be redirected from existing to new projects if the proposed budget is passed by Congress. This may impact *all* projects currently conducted in Louisiana by Wildlife Services.

We have also learned that past directives, not specifically mentioned in the proposed Fiscal Year 2007 budget language, may not be continued this year and beyond. The budget language allows the redistribution of funding from these "old" directives to general Wildlife Services' operations, nationwide. In the past, these directives were continued until rescinded by Congress. In Louisiana, two prior year directives would be affected by this decision: the one that funds the cost-shared beaver control programs with participating Parish governments and the one that funds core operations in the State. Louisiana Wildlife Services could lose approximately \$225,000 (less program support and rescission costs) and would no longer be able to provide cost-shared



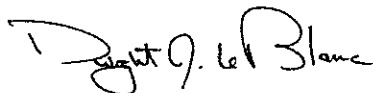
Resolving conflicts between people and wildlife

funding for beaver control or the level of support provided during Fiscal Year 2006. This reduction of services could include loss of trappers and other employees who are now funded by these unmentioned Congressional directives. Cooperators participating in cost-shared beaver control projects may be forced to decide whether to increase their funding to match lost Federal dollars or discontinue existing projects that Wildlife Services conducts for them. Additionally, Wildlife Services will have to consider eliminating all on-site visits to complainants experiencing wildlife-related problems. This would affect existing services to citizens, rabies monitoring activities, and airport response capabilities. We would have to depend on other agencies to address reported wildlife complaints when on-site visits were needed. Additionally, any new work would have to be funded by customers requesting assistance.

Without doubt, the 2007 budget, as proposed, would cause significant changes in the way the Wildlife Services program does business. We anticipate that we may not be able to provide the same level of support to our cooperators as has been provided in the past. I want you to be aware of these possible budget impacts so that you can plan accordingly. We will have a better understanding of these impacts after the joint House/Senate Conference Committee decides our budget.

I will keep you informed of any changes to the proposed 2007 budget as I receive the information. I know that you may have questions after reading this letter. I am available to discuss these at your convenience. Please feel free to call or write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dwight G. LeBlanc".

Dwight LeBlanc
State Director