



For immediate release
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Governor Richardson Urges Legislators to Protect Wildlife, Give Landowners More Tools to Protect Property

SB 391 Will Fix Depredation Law

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson today joined with advocates in urging lawmakers to act quickly and pass a bill that bans the practice of killing wildlife that damage private crops.

Senate Bill 391, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Michael Sanchez, would limit landowners' ability to kill antelope, elk and deer damaging crops while preserving their ability to take or kill predators that are threatening their property or livestock ("depredation"), and strengthening the requirements for the Department of Game & Fish to prevent or remedy damage caused by wildlife.

"The majority of landowners respect wildlife and use the state's depredation law appropriately and sparingly," said Governor Bill Richardson. "But we must act to prevent the types of actions that are offensive to many New Mexicans, who object to a few landowners killing hundreds of game animals."

SB 391 should appeal to the sensibilities of all who desire to protect private property as well as wildlife. It ensures that a person can protect human life, livestock, or pets by taking or killing predators that pose a threat to them. It also provides landowners with the assurance that they can request assistance from the Department of Game & Fish to prevent or remedy damage caused by wildlife and the Department must respond in a prompt manner and offer effective assistance. If this assistance does not work or is not practical, the landowner can seek compensation for the damages.

The bill will amend the law in several ways:

- Allow for any person to take or kill a predator (bears, cougars, or bobcats) that poses an immediate threat to human life, livestock, or pets.
- Ensure that a landowner, lessee, or employee of either may request assistance from the Department of Game & Fish to prevent or remedy depredation caused by elk, deer, antelope, cranes, or geese on private property.

- Require the Department of Game & Fish to respond to these requests in a timely and effective manner and offer realistic assistance.
- Assistance methods may include forage leases, harassment, temporary fending, population management hunts (to avoid potential waste of the animals) or other appropriate interventions.
- Allow landowners to seek compensation for damages to private property caused by wildlife when Department of Game & Fish assistance is not successful or practical.
- Eliminate the provision that allows a landowner to kill animals on private land that present an immediate threat of damage to property or kill animals when Department assistance has failed.

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