

January 13, 2015

State of California Governor
Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

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FISH AND GAME
COMMISSION

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Dear Governor Brown,

As working ranchers in Round Valley (Covelo, CA), we are concerned with the number of tule elk that reside in our valley. When there were 12 to 15 head in the herd, it was somewhat entertaining and nice to see. Now that the herd is pushing 100 head the elk are no longer a source of entertainment. We can't afford to feed the elk and our cows at the same time.

These elk are not native to this area. Fish and Wildlife placed them in our valley with no environmental impact study and without the consent of the private landowners. As landowners, we pay our taxes. Since our land is private land, why are we being burdened with the incredible costs of a pet project of Fish and Wildlife?

When Fish and Wildlife are contacted by ranchers in our rural community, ranchers are accused of harassment and are threatened with arrest and jail time. It is most unsettling to try and deal with a department that is both threatening and hostile.

The bottom line is it is difficult to make our ranches pay and we can't afford to run a state owned herd that eat as much or more than our cows. In addition, the elk knock down fences, tear up yards, and eat our hay crop.

We have been told there is no plan to alleviate this problem, such as removing the elk from our property or limiting the elk to a preserve. We want to know why removal of this non-native species is not an option. We have the right to control our own property within the law. It has also been observed that there are now Roosevelt elk in our valley, which have no doubt been placed by Fish and Wildlife.

We have been told that we can apply to the Private Lands Management Program. Since participation in this program would require considerable effort of our time and resources we do not see this as a viable option, especially for small ranchers.

Governor Brown, we need your assistance with solving this problem.

Sincerely,

Round Valley Ranchers
(The list of ranchers' names, addresses and phone numbers is attached)

cc: California Natural Resources Agency Secretary John Laird
Department of Fish and Wildlife Director Charlton H. Bonham
California Fish and Game Commission Executive Director Sonke Mastrup
State Assembly Wesley Chesbro
State Senator Noreen Evans

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cc: Ag Alert
Capital Press
California Cattlemen's Association
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
Press Democrat
Ukiah Daily Journal