

AG issues a 'risk advisory' on illegal coyote-killing contests

Written by gallupsun

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ALBUQUERQUE – Attorney General Hector Balderas issued an risk advisory to New Mexicans Friday in response to a tip about an illegal coyote-killing contest scheduled for the holiday weekend.

The AG's office said the coyote-killing contest “Dogzilla Best of the Best” was posted in a closed Facebook group and scheduled to take place in Grady, N.M. Saturday.

Balderas



warns New Mexicans that coyote-killing contests are prohibited under New Mexico law, NMSA 1978, Section 30-18-16.

"Any event such as this violates the law and will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken," the AG's office stated in a press release.

The law prohibiting coyote-killing contests went into effect July 1. It makes it a misdemeanor to organize or sponsor a coyote-killing contest and a petty misdemeanor to participate in one.

New Mexico is the third state, joining California and Vermont in outlawing these events, in which armed participants lure coyotes to their deaths using decoy sounds. Attracted by the calling devices, coyotes are drawn into the open and subsequently shot. These contests, also called derbies, entice shooters by offering cash and other prizes to those who kill the most coyotes, the biggest coyote, and the smallest coyote.

The law applies to all who take part in such contests, making organizers as well as participants subject to criminal prosecution. When enacted, the law made clear that killing a coyote in the protection of a person or property will continue to be permitted. Non-competition hunting of coyotes also remains legal.

"While I support a rancher's right to protect their livestock and land, the law does not allow the unlimited killing of animals through the use of contests for cash prizes," Balderas said.