



May 3, 2019

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez, Chair
 Assembly Appropriations Committee
 State Capitol, Room 2114
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1254 (As Amended April 11, 2019) – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez:

Our organizations, which collectively represent hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women, landowners and other wildlife enthusiasts across California, urge you to oppose AB 1254 (Kamlager-Dove) – legislation which would ban the hunting and other taking of bobcats.

AB 1254 is an unnecessary anti-hunting measure that is not based on science or sound wildlife management principles, but rather on purely emotional considerations. Bobcats are abundant and found throughout most of California. Their range also extends to much of North America, including almost all U.S. states, southern Canada and significant portions of Mexico. Hunting – which is highly regulated and based on the best available science – has very little, if any, impact upon the species. As an example, for the 2017/2018 bobcat hunting season, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) sold 11,988 bobcat tags, but only 331 animals were taken. The harvest rate of bobcats is so low – not because bobcats are scarce – but rather because bobcats are shy and secretive by nature, and because of the severe restrictions already in place on how and where they can be taken.

AB 1254 would also put unnecessary financial strain on the state. In addition to the annual loss of \$35,000 from the sales of bobcat tags and \$30,000 to review and update regulations, AB 1254 would cost “up to \$2.5 million” for CDFW to develop and implement a bobcat management plan.

Further, because bobcats prey on a variety of species, wildlife managers need the flexibility to take them, if necessary, to maintain balanced predator and prey relationships in the fragmented and isolated habitats we have on our landscape today. Legal hunting of bobcats is not only one of those management tools, it also provides significant funding for wardens, habitat enhancement and other wildlife conservation purposes via the sales of hunting licenses, stamps and tags, and tax revenue collected via the federal Pittman-Robertson Act on hunting-related equipment. In addition, hunting not only helps fund the preservation and maintenance of public wildlife habitats, it also serves as an important incentive for private landowners to maintain or enhance wildlife habitat on their lands.

Further, law abiding hunters also often serve as the “eyes and ears” of enforcement in the field in helping to prevent the illegal take of bobcats and other species. By reducing the number of legal hunters in the field who can aid wardens via CalTip reporting of poaching, marijuana cultivation and other illegal activities, the AB 1254 would also increase CDFW enforcement costs.

Finally, AB 1254 circumvents the CEQA-based regulatory process of the California Fish and Game Commission, which was established by the California State Legislature specifically to regulate hunting and the other taking of wildlife.

For all the above reasons, we respectfully urge you to strongly oppose AB 1254 when it is considered by your committee.

Sincerely,

Kyle Weaver, President and CEO
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Mark Hennelly, V.P. of Government Affairs
California Waterfowl Association

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Gary F. Brennan, President
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Fred Harpster, President
The Black Brant Group

Dennis Slater, President
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Aoibheann Cline, Western States Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Donn Walgamuth, President
California Deer Association

Don Kirby, President
Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council

Chriss Bowles, President
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

Darryl Williams, President
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Rick Travis, Executive Director
California Rifle and Pistol Association

Cathie Nelson, President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter – Safari Club International

cc: Members, Assembly Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Sydney Kamlager-Dove