



April 4, 2019

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

RE: AB 688 (As Introduced) – Firearms Storage Requirements in Vehicles – OPPOSE

Dear Chairman Gonzalez:

The below listed wildlife conservation organizations must oppose AB 688 (Chu) – legislation which would require that shotguns and/or rifles in an unattended vehicle be secured by being locked in the trunk and secured to the vehicle’s frame by a steel cable lock or chain and padlock; locked in a container that is fixed to the frame of the vehicle by a steel cable lock or chain and padlock in the trunk or in the vehicle’s interior that is not in plain view; locked in a container that is permanently affixed to the trunk or elsewhere in the vehicle that is not in plain view; or locked in a tool box or utility box.

Although we certainly support the author’s intent to reduce firearm theft, the overly strict requirements called out by AB 688 would create significant problems for many law-abiding hunters who are on their way to the field or range with their shotguns or rifles. Because many hunters drive SUVs or trucks, their vehicles do not have a trunk or other area to place their sporting arms that meets the bill’s requirement of not being “in plain view”. The bill’s additional requirement that long-guns be in a locked container and in some way chained to the vehicle frame renders it even more difficult for law-abiding hunters to comply.

While it would be extremely difficult for an individual hunter transporting a single shotgun or rifle to fully address the rigorous provisions of AB 688, it would be nearly impossible for hunters “car-pooling” to the field with multiple long-guns in their vehicle to comply. Further, it would be literally unfeasible for law-abiding Hunter Education Instructors, shooting coaches and others who must transport numerous shotguns and/or rifles for use by their students while on their way to/from the shooting range to adhere to the bill’s requirements.

Because of their relative length, shotguns and rifles used by law-abiding hunters are considerably more difficult than handguns to encase and conceal in a vehicle, as would be required by AB 688. Further, for much of the same reasons, these very common sporting arms are very rarely the weapon of choice of criminals when committing a crime. Knowing this, there is substantial precedent in the Penal Code for exempting licensed hunters from various firearm-related restrictions or requirements. Most recently, Penal Code Section 27510 was amended last year by SB 1100 (Portantino) to exempt licensed hunters from the new requirement to raise the minimum age to purchase a long gun from 18 to 21 years. It is worth noting that, to ensure that hunters handle their firearms safely and responsibly, individuals must take a 10-hour safety course and pass a difficult test prior to obtaining a hunting license. It is because of these strict requirements for obtaining a license and other traditional safety requisites, that hunting-related accidents with firearms are extremely rare in California.

The undersigned organizations strongly support making California a safer place by keeping guns out of the hands of criminals. However, AB 688's current language which also places these strict new vehicle storage requirements on common shotguns and rifles would do little address that goal. Instead, as currently written, AB 688 would turn many law-abiding hunters unknowingly into criminals.

For all the above reasons, we respectfully urge you to oppose AB 688 when it comes before your Assembly Appropriations 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 Kansen Chu