



To: Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners
6980 Sierra Center Pkwy #120
Reno, NV 89511

Re: Petition to Ban Use of Hounds for Bear Hunts

Position: Oppose

Date: March 19, 2020

Chair East, Vice Chair Barnes, and members of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners:

My name is Keely Hopkins and I am the Pacific States Assistant Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF). I respectfully urge you to oppose the petition to ban the use of hounds for bear hunting. Bear hunting with the use of dogs represents a unique way for sportsmen and women to participate in the outdoors, advance conservation efforts, and further contribute to local economies and the American System of Conservation Funding.

Since 1989, CSF has dedicated itself to the mission of working with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the conservation interests of America's hunters and anglers.

The black bear hunt, which has been successfully managed by NDOW for nine seasons now, has been proven as sustainable in its current form. Statewide, the Nevada black bear population is currently estimated to be between 600 and 800 animals. The maximum allowable harvest quota of 20 animals represents a maximum harvest level of 2.5% to 3.3% of the state's population. The average annual harvest over the history of Nevada's bear hunt from 2011-2019, is 14 bears per year, which means that the average rate of harvest is actually closer to 1.8% to 2.3% of the state's population. This is a significant consideration since most North American black bear populations can be, and oftentimes are, sustainably harvested at much higher rates of 10% to 15%. Even with the current harvest levels in Nevada, the black bear population continues to increase each year.

The use of dogs has always been a deep-seeded component of hunting for wild game, and this is particularly true for bear hunting. Without dogs, sportsmen's success afield would be severely limited. In Nevada, over 70% of the bears harvested are done so under the guidance of a licensed houndsman and his or her hounds. The use of dogs provides a unique way for Nevada's outdoorsmen and women to participate in a successful hunt, but also allows hunters to better fulfill their ethical obligations as conservationists. By hunting with dogs, sportsmen and women have increased time and opportunity to evaluate an animal prior to harvest. Using this method, hunters

can determine the age and sex of the bear, and should it not fall within sustainable harvest objectives, release the animal unharmed. This important tool provides safeguards against any overexploitation of the black bear population.

Nevada's wildlife conservation success has been achieved through collaboration of NDOW and Nevada's sportsmen and women to reestablish, conserve, and promote wildlife resources. Hunting has proven to be one of the greatest tools for wildlife and habitat conservation. The black bear hunt in Nevada has provided valuable revenue from license and tag sales, but also increases opportunities for sportsmen and women to support local economies through increased expenditures and tourism. In their preparation for hunting, sportsmen contribute to local economies, and more specifically the American System of Conservation Funding, by purchasing gear, firearms, fuel, and ammunition. The increased tourism associated with hunting provides vital revenue for Nevada's rural communities.

Respectfully, I urge the members of the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners to oppose the petition to ban the use of hounds for bear hunts. I appreciate your time and consideration on this issue. Should you require any additional information on this, or any other sportsmen-related topic, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keely M. Hopkins". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keely Hopkins
Pacific States Assistant Manager | Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
110 North Carolina Ave., SE | Washington, DC 20003
Khopkins@congressionalsportsmen.org | 916-633-3664