



1/25/2021

Honorable Members of the New Mexico Senate Conservation Committee:

My name is Ellary TuckerWilliams and I am the Inter-Mountain Western States Coordinator for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF). I respectfully urge you to oppose Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) – Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work 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 interests of America's hunters and anglers.

In 2020 alone, New Mexico sportsmen and women, trappers included, contributed over \$40 million dollars to state-based conservation. Trapping is a critical component in the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish's (Department) toolbox for managing wildlife. If SB 32 were to pass, the Department's ability to utilize trapping as a necessary tool would be severely limited, and thus it would no longer be able to rely on trappers for their assistance with population control, data collection, or depredation mitigation. Instead, the Department would be required to find additional funding and personnel to continue with the current status quo. Furthermore, without allowing New Mexico's sportsmen and women to trap on public land, allottees will be forced to turn to the Department when they are unable to address their depredation problem with cage traps, increasing the Department's workload without providing additional resources.

There are numerous examples highlighting the benefits of allowing trapping on public land for wildlife management purposes. Currently, the Department is relying solely on trappers to submit biological samples to assess whether kit foxes and swift foxes are hybridizing in the state. If it were not for the efforts and participation of trappers, the Department would have to find additional resources to staff and fund this project. Furthermore, the Department requires trappers to report their harvests and answer a series of questions which ultimately allows the wildlife managers to monitor the overall health of wildlife population more accurately. Data submitted by trappers provides information on overall population numbers, sex ratios, age structure, disease prevalence, and numerous other factors that influence wildlife populations. Again, without the efforts and participation by the trapping community, the Department would be forced to increase its workload and find additional funding to continue essential yet basic data collection efforts in the state. *Essentially, SB 32 would require the Department to find additional personnel, resources, and money to fund what the trapping community is willing to pay hard earned cash for the ability to do.*

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The regulations set forth by state wildlife agencies on trapping methods are among the most complex and comprehensive of any laws concerning wildlife harvest today. The United States and Canada have conducted the most extensive scientific testing of traps in the world to develop Best Management Practices for Trapping (BMPs), a program that ensures that traps are humane, efficient, safe and selective. Standards are applied and enforced to ensure animal welfare throughout the country, including New Mexico.

Last year, the Department finished a collaborative effort with various stakeholder groups to address concerns related to trapping on public lands. As a result, the Department opened its fur-bearer rules and made substantial changes to address the stated concerns while ensuring that trapping in the state was well within the guidelines provided by the Association for Fish and Wildlife Agencies Trapping BMPs. The Department has taken the necessary steps to address the concerns surrounding trapping on public lands, however, SB 32 is attempting to take that power away from the Department without allowing sufficient time to see the on the ground results of this regulatory change.

Fish and wildlife management decisions, such as this, must be left to the Department – the body best equipped to make informed, science-based decisions, and cannot be left to individuals who lack the necessary information to make informed decisions. If allowed to proceed, SB 32 would ultimately undermine the ability of the Department of Fish and Game to effectively carry out its mission while simultaneously having detrimental impacts on effective wildlife conservation and human wildlife conflict mitigation in the state. For these reasons, please oppose SB 32 – Wildlife Conservation and Public Safety Act.

Sincerely,

Ellary TuckerWilliams

Inter-Mountain Western States Coordinator

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