



**To: Hon. James J. Kennedy
Chair
Assembly Environment, Natural Resources, and Solid Waste Committee
Office of Legislative Services
P.O. Box 068
Trenton, NJ 08625**

Re: Assembly Bill 2920 – Increasing Minimum Age for Trapping

Position: Oppose

Date: 6/27/2024

Dear Chairman Kennedy,

As the Senior Coordinator, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge that Assembly Bill 2920 (AB 2920) does not receive a Committee hearing. This bill will prohibit anyone under the age of 18 from participating in the longstanding tradition of trapping. Trapping is a highly regulated activity, is one of the cornerstones of our outdoor heritage, and plays a crucial role in furbearer and predator management, as well as in the management of nuisance wildlife to reduce human-wildlife conflicts. The passage of AB 2920 will also be detrimental to New Jersey's outdoor heritage, conservation through wildlife management practices, and most noticeably, hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3).¹

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Increasing the minimum age to purchase a trapping license from its current age of 12 to 18, is detrimental to the recruitment of new trappers and prohibits access and opportunity for upcoming sportsmen and women. Trapping is an extremely effective practice for furbearer and predator management, which is crucial for the population success of other species that were previously near extinction such as the wood duck and wild turkey, which are now thriving from conservation and restoration efforts that include trapping programs. Additionally, the sale of trapping licenses assists in

¹ [Hunter Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation \(R3\)](#)

funding the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's (NJDEP) Division of Fish & Wildlife, which is the primary agency responsible for wildlife management in the Garden State. It is also important to note that the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies conducted extensive research on restraining traps using funds from annual appropriations by Congress. Since 1996, the trapping methods developed from this research have been continuously incorporated into Best Management Practices (BMPs) for fur-bearing species. As a component of this research, veterinarians have examined all captured animals, and all common trap designs have been field tested for each individual species. State fish and wildlife agencies, such as the NJDEP Division of Fish & Wildlife, have incorporated some of these BMPs into their trapping regulations to ensure the use of effective, selective, and humane trapping technology. Consequently, trapping is already a *strictly* regulated activity, and the sportsmen's community is in favor of rigorous enforcement of all relevant laws and regulations along with severe penalties for any violations.

Professional wildlife managers also frequently use data gathered by traps and trappers when monitoring population dynamics of various wildlife species from one year to the next. Without this crucial data, managers would not be able to accurately evaluate the short-term and long-term well-being of many wildlife populations. Additionally, trapping is an invaluable conservation tool in wildlife damage management programs that target invasive species responsible for significant habitat degradation and ecosystem health threats. Proper regulation and monitoring of traps reduces the potential for unintended captures and restores ecosystems to a better condition that is capable of supporting a thriving, healthy, and sustainable populations of native wildlife.

Subsequently, being a successful and effective trapper is a time-honored craft that requires trial and error along with hands-on experience. Trapping is a skill that is usually passed down generationally through families and is an activity that can be taught and appreciated by the entire family, especially during one's youth. Trapping teaches important skills such as wildlife identification, wildlife behaviors, the animal food chain, and a crucial survival skill.

In closing, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation opposes legislation that threatens outdoor heritage, access and opportunity, and R3 initiatives, such as AB 2920. For these reasons, I respectfully request that AB 2920 does not receive a Committee hearing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kaleigh E. Leager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kaleigh E. Leager
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