



June 14, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Chair  
Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 160  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 470 (Jones) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Garcia:

Our organizations, which represent hundreds of thousands of fish and wildlife conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts in California, urge you to support SB 470 (Jones), which would create an annual combination hunting and fishing license.

California hunting and fishing license sales, which totaled \$84 million in 2020, have declined for decades, despite the recent uptick in revenues during the COVID pandemic. This decline not only contributes to the structural revenue imbalance faced by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), but has negative consequences for wildlife habitat, enforcement and other conservation activities that are funded through licenses. Other hunting and fishing-related revenue, such as the sale of required stamps, tags and validations (\$26 million) and Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment (\$27 million), also provide important monies for wildlife conservation work in California on an annual basis.

In addition, hunting and fishing activities in California support tens of thousands of jobs and significant economic activity, especially in rural areas.

One factor that has likely contributed to the downward license trend is a dearth of consumer choice in the types of licenses that DFW offers. As compared with other states, California has relatively few types of hunting and fishing licenses and only a handful of changes have been made to our licensing system in the last 20 years. Many sportsmen and women believe more needs to be done to update the license system, and a number of changes, including the adoption of a combination hunting and fishing license, were recently supported by stakeholder groups during DFW's hunting and fishing recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3) public input process.

About 40 other states have combination hunting and fishing licenses, including neighboring Oregon, Nevada and Arizona.

SB 470 would not only create a combination hunting and fishing license, it would allow the license to be valid from 365 days from the date of purchase—a change which a number of other states have also already adopted. This would facilitate the ability of license buyers to most effectively utilize the license. In addition, the bill would allow purchasers to automatically renew their license each year. This option is currently available for fishing license buyers in California, but not for hunting licenses.

As cited on page 10 of “Exploring Recent Increase in Hunting and Fishing Participation” [Microsoft Word - Hunting and Fishing Increase Final Report\\_hunting.doc \(recpro.org\)](#), a study by Responsive Management in 2008 “asked state wildlife professionals to suggest and assess factors that might have affected license sales in their state. The study found that an important factor that may have increased license sales is changing types of licenses (e.g., creation of new licenses, re-packaging or renaming licenses). Of state fish and wildlife agencies that were polled in the survey, from 28% to 37%, depending on which year was considered, named license type changes as a factor affecting their license sales increase.”

Please also note that SB 470 would not take effect until 2024, which would allow DFW sufficient time to implement its provisions. In addition, the bill would allow the California Fish and Game Commission to set the fee for the license to ensure that the state fully recovers its implementation costs. Like other licenses fees, the combination license price would also be annually adjusted for inflation.

Our current hunting and fishing license system is largely outdated and in need of modifications, especially innovative changes like combination licenses which have proven themselves in other states. Please support SB 470 when it is considered by your committee.

Sincerely,

Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Legislative Affairs  
California Waterfowl

Wayne Kotow, Executive Director  
Coastal Conservation Association California

Keely Hopkins, California State Director  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

David Dickerson, VP State Government Relations  
National Marine Manufacturers Association

Devin O'Dea, California Chapter Coordinator  
Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Ric Ortega, General Manager  
Grassland Water District

Jerry Desmond, Esq., Director of Government Relations  
Recreational Boaters of California

James Stone, Executive Director  
NorCal Guides Association

Christy Plummer, Chief Conservation Officer  
Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Blake Henning, Chief Conservation Officer,  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Steve Chappell, Executive Director  
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Danielle Cloutier, PhD, Pacific Fisheries Policy Director  
American Sportfishing Association

Dan Whisenhunt, CEO  
California Deer Association

Daniel S. Reid, Western Regional Director  
National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action

Michael Findlay, Director of Government Relations – State Affairs  
National Shooting Sports Foundation

Gary Brennan, President  
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Roy Griffith, Legislative Director  
California Rifle and Pistol Association

Fred Harpster, President  
The Black Brant Group

Chriss Bowles, President  
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

Jim Mauritz – President  
Oceanside Senior Anglers

cc: Members, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee