



April 6, 2018

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

RE: AB 2805 (As Amended March 22, 2018) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Garcia:

The below signatory wildlife conservation organizations strongly urge your support for AB 2805 (as amended March 22, 2018), legislation which would facilitate the ability to control the damage wild pigs do to our wildlife habitats, farms and ranches, while promoting and expanding hunting as a highly effective wild pig management tool on public and private lands.

The feral pigs we find in California today got their start when European wild boar introduced to Monterey County in the 1920s bred with freely foraging domestic swine. Roughly a century later, this exotic species can already be found in 56 of California's 58 counties, and in a variety of habitats ranging from woodland chaparral, meadow and grasslands. Well known as prolific year-round breeders, the populations and ranges of wild pigs continue to expand throughout our state.

Known for their ravenous appetite and rooting behavior, wild pigs destroy habitats for native wildlife by disturbing natural vegetation and reducing available forage. In addition, wild pigs feed on native reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals. Their food preferences also make them highly competitive with other native wildlife species – including deer and black bear – which are highly dependent on acorns and other hard mast crops which are a favorite of wild pigs. Further, their rooting and wallowing also disturbs riparian areas and impacts habitats for native and endangered wildlife species. In more urban areas, wild pigs can cause extensive damage to lawns and gardens.

Wild pigs also do tremendous damage to farms and ranches by invading farm fields, eating crops, destroying available forage for livestock, and leaving behind fecal matter that pose a serious risk to

human and livestock health by serving as vectors for numerous diseases and parasites. They have also been known to prey upon lambs, full grown sheep, baby goats, and calves. In fact, one recent study noted a 6 to 10% loss in revenue in various agricultural commodities in California when wild pigs are present.

Wild pigs are also coveted as a “big game” species and natural meat resource for California’s outdoorsmen and women. Further, the revenues generated from the sale of hunting licenses and tags to those who hunt pigs in California are provided to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) for big game habitat restoration and research.

The approach offered by AB 2805 would balance the need to better control the impact wild pigs have on our wildlife and our agricultural producers, with the need to protect their recreational harvest and the revenues it generates. More specifically, AB 2805 would maintain and enhance the ability of landowners to control depredating pigs, while expressly promoting their use of sport hunting as an effective management tool. Among other things, AB 2805 would make pig hunting more affordable by replacing the need for hunters to purchase for one pig tag/pig harvested with a single pig “validation” good for the entire season. Further, the legislation would require DFW to promote the use of hunting as a tool for controlling depredating pigs – including implementation of the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program to promote and enhance public hunting opportunities on private lands.

Because AB 2805 would help California better control its growing wild pig problems, while increasing affordable hunting opportunity as a management tool, we urge your strong support for AB 2805 when the bill comes before your committee on April 10th.

Sincerely,

Steve Chappell, Executive Director
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Donn Walgamuth, President
California Deer Association

Don Kirby, President
Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council

Mark Hennelly, V.P. of Government Affairs
California Waterfowl Association

Fred Harpster, President
The Black Brant Group

Chriss Bowles, President
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

cc: Members, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
The Honorable Assembly Member Frank Bigelow