



June 5, 2018

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair
Senate Public Safety Committee
State Capitol, Room 2031
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 3 (Bonta) Firearms: Age restrictions – OPPOSE

Dear Senator Skinner:

California Waterfowl regrets to oppose AB 3, a bill that would restrict the sale of “long guns” to persons 21 years of age or older.

As an organization, California Waterfowl abhors school violence. California Waterfowl believes that proper and competent enforcement of existing laws should be sufficient to prevent gun violence at schools. California Waterfowl opposed AB 424 in 2017 that removed the authority of school superintendents to improve security by authorizing personnel to possess firearms on campus for the protection of students. California Waterfowl also opposed SB 620 in 2017 that made previously mandatory enhancements for using firearms in the commission of crimes discretionary.

California Waterfowl works to restore wetlands, and to maximize the food and habitat value of restored and existing wetlands for both migratory and local breeding populations of waterfowl. The organization is rated four stars by Charity Navigator (www.charitynavigator.org). California Waterfowl believes that hunters are the driving force for wetland conservation. CWA works to ensure that Californians have adequate access to hunting lands, and that regulations and laws don't stifle responsible, ethical hunting.

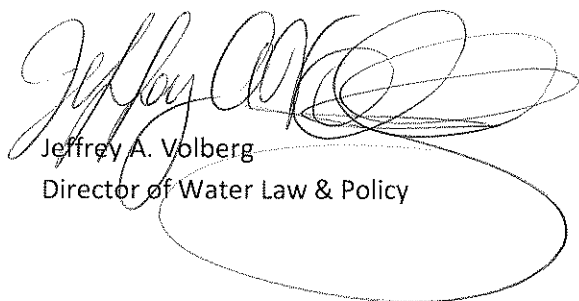
The California Department of Fish & Wildlife considers a person 18 years old or older as an adult with respect to the purchase of a hunting license. A person over 18 years old is no longer allowed to participate in junior hunts. Possession of a hunting license by a junior or adult requires the passage of a hunter safety course and examination. Restrictions on the ability of 18, 19, and 20 year-olds to purchase firearms to hunt with will create a disincentive to purchase a hunting license, which will have a detrimental effect on CDFW revenues.

CDFW is having trouble meeting its budget through the Fish & Game Preservation Fund because of the decline in sales of hunting and fishing licenses. As restrictions on hunters' ability to obtain firearms and ammunition increase, license sales decrease. The department has launched an effort to recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters in order to halt the decline in license sales. California Waterfowl has been an enthusiastic supporter of the “R3” program at the department.

California Waterfowl may consider dropping its opposition to AB 3 if the bill were amended to exempt persons between the ages of 18 and 21 from the restriction on firearms purchases if they possess a valid and current hunting license. This is the approach taken by Senator Portantino in SB 1100, which has passed out of the Senate.

We urge your "No" vote on this bill, unless it is amended to exempt licensed hunters. If you would like further information about California Waterfowl and its conservation programs, please contact Jeffrey Volberg at (916) 217-5117 or jvolberg@calwaterfowl.org or Mark Hennelly at (916) 648-1406 or mhennelly@calwaterfowl.org.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Volberg
Director of Water Law & Policy