



May 25, 2019

The Honorable Henry I. Stern, Chair  
Natural Resources and Water Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5046  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 273 (Gonzalez): “Wildlife Protection Act of 2019” - OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Stern,

The undersigned wildlife conservation organizations urge you to oppose AB 273 (Gonzalez) – legislation which would prohibit the trapping of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal for purposes of recreation or commerce in fur and prohibit the sale of the raw fur of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal.

The California State Legislature has delegated to the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) the authority to manage our state’s fish and wildlife species, including the authority to regulate methods of take for game and nongame mammals. Under this designated authority, strict regulations dealing with the trapping of furbearers have been promulgated by the Commission – in public forum, based on the best-available science and with full consideration of input from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the general public.

In addition to being heavily regulated by the Commission, existing law requires those who wish to trap fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals for recreational or commercial purposes to obtain a trapping license. To do so, applicants must pass a rigorous test developed by CDFW to ensure their competence and proficiency in the field, as well as their knowledge of laws and regulations pertaining to trapping, ethics and the natural history of the species authorized to trap.

Current law also already requires that no body-gripping traps are used and that any furbearers that are caught are dispatched in a quick and humane manner. Furthermore, California has adopted best management practices in conjunction with other states that are based on five main criteria: animal-welfare, selectivity, efficiency, human safety, and practicality. Existing laws, regulations and policy reflect these strict criteria.

Additionally, regulated trapping is an essential element of responsible wildlife management in California and throughout North America. Trapping seasons, zones, methods and bag limits are based on science, and designed to conserve the resource while helping to maintain populations in balance with their ecosystem. To that end, trappers typically focus effort where furbearing populations are high or in excess of their habitat carrying capacity. Further, among other things, recreational trappers provide public and private wetland managers with a necessary and cost-effective tool for controlling species that do severe damage to levees and overly predate on waterfowl and other ground nesting birds.

The trapping of fur-bearing mammals or nongame mammals in California is already highly controlled by both statute and regulation to ensure all trapping is done in the most humane fashion and that populations of trappable species are maintained at sustainable levels. Further, the California State Legislature has delegated the authority to manage our state's fish and wildlife species and regulate methods of take to the Commission, in public forum and with full consideration of the best available science. By proposing to prohibit the trapping of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammals, AB 273 would undermine the very regulatory authority that the Legislature has granted to the Commission.

For all the above reasons, we respectfully urge your opposition of AB 273 when the bill comes before your Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

Kyle Weaver, President and CEO  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Government Affairs  
California Waterfowl Association

Donn Walgamuth, President  
California Deer Association

John Devney, Senior Vice President  
Delta Waterfowl

Lori Jacobs, President  
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Darryl Williams, President  
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Dennis Slater, President  
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Gary F. Brennan, President  
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Don Kirby, President  
Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council

Chriss Bowles, President  
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

Rick Travis, Executive Director  
California Rifle and Pistol Association

Fred Harpster, President  
Black Brant Group

cc: The Honorable Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez  
Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee