

The Hon. Christine Kehoe, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2206
Sacramento, CA 95814



August 1, 2012

RE: AB 1162 (Chesbro) – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Kehoe:

The California Waterfowl Association (CWA) urges your support of AB 1162 (Chesbro), which would provide for increased penalties for certain egregious poaching violations, including the intentional take of trophy game animals using illegal methods.

This measure would help ensure that poachers pay back the full value of the wildlife they took from the public by increasing fines and other penalties to more accurately reflect the significant value of those natural resources. For example, some deer, elk, antelope and bighorn sheep hunting tags now sell for over \$50,000; in addition, guided hunts for these big game species may cost tens of thousands of dollars. Yet, in many cases the maximum criminal fines for illegally taking them total only a few thousand dollars, at most.

To address this monetary discrepancy and serve as a deterrent to poaching, AB 1162 would authorize fines of up to \$40,000 and other significant penalties. Like other F&G violations, the bill would require that half of the fine revenue remain in the County in which the violation occurred, but also provide that the local District Attorney be reimbursed first—to provide an incentive for prosecution. The remaining half would be deposited in the Department of Fish and Game's dedicated accounts and used for habitat protection and other game conservation efforts.

Please note that the penalties provided under AB 1162 are very similar to those authorized under AB 708 (Huffman) (Chapter 290, Statutes of 2009). While AB 708 targeted commercial and excess possession limit violations, AB 1162 would instead address cases where violators purposely target trophy game animals through illegal means, including the use of bait, the use of artificial lights, taking game out of season and wasting game meat. In addition, the bill would strengthen penalties for bear poaching violations that involve high-tech equipment and are carried out for profit.

It should also be noted that several other states, including New Mexico, Idaho, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Montana, have implemented laws similar to AB 1162 in recent years to address ongoing poaching problems, and they have been well received by state fish and game agencies, hunters and private landowners alike.

For these reasons, please support AB 1162.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Hennelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mark Hennelly, Vice-President of Legislative Affairs and Public Policy
California Waterfowl Association

Cc: Members, Senate Appropriations Committee
The Honorable Wes Chesbro, Assembly Member, 1st District
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