



March 17, 2021

The Honorable Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer Sr, Chair
Assembly Public Safety Committee
1020 N Street, Room 111
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1223 - OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Jones-Sawyer,

The undersigned wildlife conservation organizations must strongly oppose AB 1223 – legislation which would impose an additional excise tax of \$25 per new handgun or semiautomatic rifle or shotgun sold and a yet to be determined excise tax on the gross receipts from any sale of ammunition. AB 1223 would require the revenues collected to be deposited in the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Firearm and Ammunition Tax Fund and appropriated to fund programs to address the effects the criminal use of firearms has upon families and communities across our state.

All of California’s law-abiding public benefit from efforts to implement programs which remediate the impacts of illegal gun violence upon California families and communities, and all should equally help to fund their implementation. Yet, AB 1223 would place the entire burden of funding these remediation efforts on the backs of law-abiding hunters and shooters who legally purchase their firearms and ammunition and who have no more to do with firearm violence than any other law-abiding Californian.

AB 1223 would also have a substantial impact upon our state’s wildlife and the enjoyment they provide all our public. Law-abiding hunters and shooters who legally purchase sporting arms and munitions already pay an 11% federal excise tax on the purchase of these goods via the federal Pittman-Robertson Act. This tax contributes tens of millions of dollars annually to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife – revenue which funds a large portion of our state’s wildlife management, conservation, and research efforts. Placing additional taxes on top of the existing excise taxes charged on sporting arms and

munitions will only further drive up the cost of these goods, reduce their sales and, in turn, reduce the critical annual revenues available for California's wildlife conservation and management efforts.

All of California's citizens support and benefit from efforts intended to address the effects the criminal use of firearms has upon California's law-abiding public. Yet, AB 1223 would wrongly place the burden of funding the CalVIP Grant Program on a very small segment of our law-abiding public, while also having substantial unintended impacts on our state's wildlife conservation efforts.

For all the above reasons, we urge your opposition to AB 1223 when the bill comes before your Assembly Public Safety Committee on April 6, 2021.

Sincerely,

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Don Martin, President
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Dan Whisenhunt, Chief Executive Officer
California Deer Association

Steve Chappell, Executive Director
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Fred Harpster, President
Black Brant Group

Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Government Relations
California Waterfowl Association

Steve Miller, President
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Gary F. Brennan, President
San Diego County Wildlife Federation

Corey Thompson, President
Cal-Ore Wetland and Waterfowl Council

Chriss Bowles, President
California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association

James Stone, President
Nor-Cal Guides & Sportsmen's Association

Rick Travis, Director of Development
California Rifle & Pistol Association

Cathie Nelson, President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter - Safari Club International

cc: The Honorable Marc Levine