



July 21, 2020

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

Re: AB 3030 (Kalra) – Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Senator Stern:

The undersigned wildlife conservation and fishery organizations regrettably must “Oppose Unless Amended” AB 3030 (Kalra).

We appreciate the opportunities Assembly Member Kalra's staff has provided us over the past few weeks for dialogue with them and the sponsors. These conversations have been informative about the intentions of the sponsors, the purpose of the bill as they see it, and have allowed for discussion regarding our interpretation and concerns. Unfortunately, the sponsors have downplayed our concerns and largely rejected the amendments we believe are most critically necessary to move our organizations to a neutral position on this bill. Worse yet, they have terminated conversations with us and are now moving forward with amendments to which we have not agreed.

We remain very concerned about the broad and sweeping nature of the bill. Unless the extent and impacts of existing protections on lands and inland waters are expressly acknowledged in this legislation, unnecessary closures will likely result – further restricting hunting and recreational angling opportunity and possibly setting the stage for another contentious fight. In truth, this bill reads like a resolution supporting an international framework of 30/30 protection, not a bill identifying specific threats to biodiversity or deficiencies in California's robust environmental framework with clear metrics and actionable items that are grounded in consensus and science.

It is due to these above-mentioned concerns that we cannot remove our opposition to AB 3030 until the bill is amended to provide clarity and definition around the following points:

- With improved access an alleged goal of the bill, operative language must secure – at a minimum – existing access for hunting and recreational fishing unless such activities harm biodiversity.
- We have sought express operative language that makes clear that well-managed, sustainable hunting and recreational fishing activities with low ecological impacts are compatible with the protections sought in the bill. However, the sponsors have repeatedly refused to include this clarifying language. The objections have been disingenuous at times, including the supposed lack of definition of the word “sustainable” even while the sponsors use the obscure, undefined term “ecosystem services.” The statute must make clear – consistent with the overarching legislative goal of improving access – that there is no inherent conflict between recreational access and biodiversity protection.
- Reference to international guidance should specify biodiversity protection rather than reference to unidentified “objectives” and “terms” beyond or different from biodiversity protection.
- Clarification around some of the broad and ambiguous concepts in the bill that, for example, state that existing protections are insufficient, without identifying specifics.
- The bill needs clarity around the definition of “protection” so that we all have a clear vision of what is being proposed, should the bill become law. The existing, imprecise definition could lead to some interpreting the purpose of this bill as a means to restrict or deny access or take on our lands or inland waters. The uncertainty around these terms – what does it mean to be “protected?”; why are existing protections not sufficient?; are traditional outdoor recreational pursuits compatible with “protections?” – lead to ambiguity and confusion and concern among our communities.

The proposed language states that “it is the goal of the state to protect at least 30 percent of California's land areas and waters... by 2030.” No responsible hunter or angler would oppose this goal. Similarly, every responsible hunter and angler should support healthy biodiversity, as well as thriving wildlife and fishery resources. The work our organizations do today are to support robust opportunity for hunters and anglers now, and for the generations to come.

While goals of AB 3030 appear laudable, these goals have already been accomplished on California's inland lands and waters. Working in partnership with the state and federal governments, hunters, conservation NGOs and others have worked to establish and best manage a sweeping network of state wildlife areas, National Wildlife Refuges, National Monuments, State Parks, ecological preserves, other public “protected”

lands and private lands placed under conservation easements which arguably already far exceed the 30% land area protection goal called out in the bill. In fact, the *California Protected Areas Database* estimates the total area of protected land in California to be 49,294,000 acres, or 47.05% of the state's landmass, not including easements (<https://www.calands.org/>).

Further, conversations with the sponsors have illuminated the scope and magnitude of the concerns they are seeking to address with this bill. Those items, among others, consist of pollution by onshore runoff, ocean acidification, rising sea temperatures, a loss of terrestrial biodiversity, loss of terrestrial natural areas, risk of extinction of terrestrial species, and climate change. Enacting further restrictions to hunting and fishing access and opportunity would provide no benefit towards addressing these concerns. Rather, further restrictions would only reduce hunter and angler generated revenues available to address these issues, while also reducing the hunting and angling community's incentive to partner in these efforts.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and World Commission on Protected Areas (IUCN) has acknowledged the role of hunting in wildlife conservation and the significant benefits it provides to both game and threatened species and their natural habitats.

Whatever abuses of land and ocean ecosystems that may exist around the world, the land, inland waters, and ocean waters off the coast of California are already well-protected through a combination of federal and state measures. This protection already exceeds the 30 percent goal of this legislation. We are justifiably concerned that this legislation, if not amended to recognize these existing protections and integrated approach, will serve as a vehicle to introduce additional closures to wildlife-dependent recreational activities such as hunting and fishing. The irony, of course, is that such go-it-alone closures would be the antithesis of "of an integrated approach to management" contemplated by the IUCN.

We continue to be ready to work with you, committee staff and other stakeholders on amendments to address our concerns.

Sincerely,

Donn Walgamuth, President
California Deer Association

Don Martin, President
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

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

Rick Travis, Director of Development
California Rifle & Pistol Association

Mark Hennelly, V.P. of Government Relations
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Steve Chappell, Executive Director
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Gary F. Brennan, President
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Aoibheann Cline, California State Director
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Fred Harpster, President
The Black Brant Group

Adam Chavez, President
California Hawking Club

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Don Kirby, President
Cal-Ore Wetlands and Waterfowl Council

Kyle Weaver, President and CEO
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Tom Raftican, Delegate
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Kevin Vella, District Biologist California/Nevada
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Michael Findlay, Director of Government Relations - State Affairs
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Daniel S. Reid, Western Regional Director
National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action

cc: Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Wade Crowfoot, Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
Chuck Bonham, Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Anthony Williams, Office of Governor Newsom