



March 25, 2021

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia, Chair
 Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee
 State Capitol, Room 219
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 645 (As Amended 3/11/2021) – Fish and Wildlife: Poaching/Penalties – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Garcia,

The undersigned non-profit wildlife conservation organizations, which collectively represent hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women, landowners, and other wildlife enthusiasts across California, are pleased to strongly support AB 645 – legislation which, as amended March 11, 2021, would reinstate a maximum 3-year probation for the most serious violations of the Fish and Game Code.

In an effort to curb poaching, over the course of the last several years our community has worked to introduce and pass legislation to increase penalties for the most egregious poaching violations – including bills which significantly increased fines for possessing more than three times the daily bag limit and for the illegal take of wildlife for profit or personal gain, and which increased penalties for the illegal take of trophy-class animals.

Unfortunately, these positive efforts took a step back last year when the State Legislature passed legislation that reduced maximum probation from three years to one year for all misdemeanor violations whose provisions do not call out a specific probation length. Because current law does not specify maximum probation periods for any poaching crimes, the effect of this legislation was to limit probation for even the most serious misdemeanor poaching violations to one year.

Prior to passage of last year’s legislation, a judge could sentence individuals convicted of serious poaching crimes to probation that would prohibit them from hunting for up to three years. Not only did

the option of a longer probationary period help keep these criminals out of the field, it also helped to ensure that associated penalty assessments would be collected.

By reinstating the necessary and appropriate penalties for the most serious poaching violations, AB 645 would help provide California's precious wildlife resources with the protections they need by providing a greater deterrents to poaching and keeping the most egregious poachers out of the field.

For all the above stated reasons, the undersigned wildlife conservation organizations are pleased to strongly support this much-needed legislation and urge your support when it comes before your committee on April 8th.

Sincerely,

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Don Martin, President
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Dan Whisenhunt, Chief Executive Officer
California Deer Association

Adam Chavez, President
California Hawking Club

Fred Harpster, President
Black Brant Group

Keely Hopkins, Western States Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

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

Steve Chappell, Executive Director
Suisun Resource Conservation District

Blake Henning, Chief Conservation Officer
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

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

Mark Hennelly, Vice President of Government Relations
California Waterfowl Association

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