



March 13, 2020

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

**RE: SB 1041 (Hueso) – OPPOSE**

Dear Senator Stern:

The undersigned wildlife conservation organizations, which collectively represent hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women, landowners and other wildlife enthusiasts across California, must strongly oppose SB 1041 (Hueso) – legislation which would ban the use of any dog for the purpose of hunting deer at any time and allow the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to capture or dispatch a dog being used to hunt deer.

First and foremost, SB 1041 would wrongly bypass the science-based regulatory process of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) which includes full scientific input from DFW, incorporates critical California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis into decision making, and which allows for robust public input. Established by the California State Constitution and comprised of five commissioners appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, the Commission has been responsible for defining natural resource policy – including hunting seasons, bag limits and methods of take for California's game species – since 1870.

Supporters of this measure make numerous erroneous allegations about what happens in the field. As just one example, they dishonestly claim that packs of dogs used by hunters run amuck, cornering, catching and/or mauling deer and other animals. Fact is that regulations adopted by the Commission already carefully restrict hunters to one dog in the field when hunting deer, and when and where they can be used. Further, it is already illegal to use dogs to run down deer or to allow dogs to harm wildlife pursuant to Fish and Game Code Sections 3960 and 3961. In truth, hunters only use a trained and controllable dog in the field, as using an untrained dog would only defeat any chance of a successful hunt. Finally, proponents for this legislation make the horrible allegation that hunters simply outfit their dogs with GPS collars and then remain in their vehicles to track coordinates on a screen.

Dogs used to hunt deer are normally small dogs such as beagles, Jack Russell terriers and are used to recover deer, not to “pursue” them. This is necessary because many parts of California deer country include areas with heavy brush and cover, such as the chaparral areas of the foothills. The dog is a conservation tool which helps ensure that game is not lost in the field nor wasted – similar to a bird hunter using a dog to find waterfowl or pheasants in areas of thick vegetation.

Blacktail deer and mule deer are found throughout California. Hunting, which is highly regulated and based on the best available science, has very little, if any, impact upon them. Specifically, the use of dogs to hunt deer is fully considered and determined to not have an adverse impact on deer populations in the environmental document produced by DFW and approved by the Commission prior to the adoption of annual hunting regulations.

Current Fish and Game Code and Title 14 regulations already highly regulate the hunting of deer with dogs in California. SB 1041 is an unnecessary anti-hunting measure that is not based on science or sound wildlife management principles, but rather on purely uninformed emotional considerations. It is because of the above stated reasons that the wildlife conservation organizations listed below respectfully ask for your strong opposition to SB 1041 when it is considered by your committee on March 24<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely

Donn Walgamuth, President  
California Deer Association

Paul Trouette, President  
Mendocino County Blacktail Association

Fred Harpster, President  
Black Brant Group

Adam Chavez, President  
California Hawking Club

Lori Jacobs, President  
California Houndmen for Conservation

Don Martin, President  
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Steve Miller, 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

Mark Hennelly, Vice President Government Relations  
California Waterfowl Association

Aoibheann Cline, Western States Coordinator  
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

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

Daniel S. Reid, Western Regional Director  
National Rifle Association – Institute for Legislative Action

cc: Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee  
The Honorable Ben Hueso