



September 12, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 1021 O St., Suite 9000
 Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 28 – REQUEST FOR VETO

Dear Governor Newsom:

The undersigned non-profit wildlife conservation organizations strongly urge your veto of AB 28 – legislation which would impose an additional excise tax of 11% on the retail sale of all firearms, firearm parts, and ammunition sold in California. AB 28 would require the revenues to be deposited in the “Gun Violence Prevention, Healing, and Recovery Fund” and used to fund gun violence prevention, education, and research programs.

The wildlife conservation community and other lawful gun owners are also impacted by the illegal use of firearms, and we support programs which mitigate the impact of gun violence on our public. But we must strongly oppose AB 28 because it would place the entire burden of funding these programs on innocent law-abiding citizens that legally purchase and lawfully use firearms. Because those who perform these illegal acts do not buy firearms or munitions from licensed dealers, they would not pay a single cent towards the programs this bill would fund. Because all of California’s citizens benefit from programs intended to address the negative impact the criminal use of firearms has upon our law-abiding public, all should equally contribute to their funding.

Further, by substantially raising the cost of purchasing a firearm and ammunition in California, AB 28 would unreasonably impact the ability of those in communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence to legally purchase a firearm to protect themselves and their loved ones. AB 28 would also impede their equitable access to hunting and shooting sports – at a time when your Administration is seeking to increase participation in outdoor recreation and access for all Californians.

Firearms and ammunition are already taxed at the federal level pursuant to the federal Pittman-Robertson Act (PR). But those dollars are allocated back to states to fund beneficial programs – including wildlife habitat projects that benefit game and non-game species. This year alone, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife received \$35 million in federal PR dollars – monies that will fund a substantial portion of our state’s wildlife management, conservation, and research efforts. By doubling the excise tax law-abiding hunters and shooters already pay on all firearms and ammunition, AB 28 would effectively raise the total tax rate on these items to nearly 30% – markedly reducing their sales and, in turn, the associated federal PR funding allocated back to California for critical wildlife conservation and management efforts.

In addition, at a time when California can ill afford the additional expense of implementing upstart efforts, AB 28 would mandate a costly new undertaking on the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA). In fact, CDTFA estimates that their cost to identify and notify taxpayers, create a new tax return, program computer systems, revise publications and audit and compliance manuals, develop special notices and tax guides, create

regulations, prepare guidelines for staff, and answer questions from retailers and the public would far exceed \$1 million.

AB 28 would do nothing to reduce criminal use of firearms. What AB 28 would do is unjustly place the entire burden of funding these initiatives on California's innocent and law-abiding hunters and shooters, inequitably impact the ability of those in disadvantaged communities to protect themselves and their families, and negatively impact our wildlife and their habitats.

For all the above reasons, we strongly urge your veto of AB 28.

Sincerely,

Ryan Bronson, Director of Government Affairs
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Don Martin, President
California Chapter – Wild Sheep Foundation

Lori Jacobs, President
California Houndsmen for Conservation

Adam Chavez, President
California Hawking Club

Steve Jarvis, 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, Legislative Director
California Rifle & Pistol Association

Lisa C. McNamee, Legislative Coordinator
California Chapters – Safari Club International

Keely Hopkins, Western States Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Bob Keagy, President
Golden Gate Chapter – Safari Club International

Clark Smith, President
San Francisco Bay Area Chapter – Safari Club International

Devin O'Dea, California Chapter Coordinator
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

Wayne Wickham, President
Sacramento Safari Club

Charles Whitwam, President
HOWL for Wildlife

Marc Engstrom, Director of Public Policy, California
Ducks Unlimited

Dawnita Harwood, President
California State Chapter – National Wild Turkey Federation