5. REGULATION CHANGE PETITION 2021-017

Today's Item **Information ☐** **Action ☒**

Discuss and potentially make recommendations on a potential future rulemaking to amend big game hunting regulations proposed under Petition 2021-017.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions

• Commission received petition	Oct 14, 2021; Webinar/Teleconference
• Commission referred petition to WRC	Dec 15-16, 2021; Webinar/Teleconference
• Petition workshop	Jan 27, 2022, WRC; Webinar/Teleconference
• WRC discussion	May 19, 2022; WRC, Redding
• **Today's discussion and potential recommendation**	**Jan 11-12, 2023; WRC, Arcadia**

Background

In late 2021, the Commission received petition 2021-017 (Exhibit 1) seeking a number of changes to big game hunting regulations that fall broadly into five categories: general regulations, bear, elk, desert bighorn sheep, and deer. At its Dec 2021 meeting, the Commission referred the petition to the Wildlife Resources Committee for discussion and recommendation. At its Jan 2022 meeting, the committee requested that staff schedule a workshop to continue discussing the petition; the workshop was held on Jan 27, 2022.

At today's meeting the Department will offer recommendations on some of the proposals in the petition (Exhibit 2), for general discussion and potential recommendations by the committee.

Significant Public Comments

1. Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife, along with forty-six additional commenters, oppose the addition of a second bear tag, for a variety of biological and philosophical reasons (see example in Exhibit 3). Many also oppose hunting black bears in general, though the petitioner did not include a request to prohibit hunting for black bears.
2. Sixteen commenters support a second bear tag, along with suggestions for an identified loophole, returned-tag sales, and premium hunts (see example in Exhibit 4).
3. The petitioner provides suggested prioritization and additional rationales for the proposed regulation changes in Petition 2021-017 (Exhibit 5).

Recommendation

Commission staff: Support the Department's recommendations identified in Exhibit 2, specifically:

- grant or deny item 1 based on whether the Wildlife Resources Committee supports the proposal in agenda item 2 for this meeting;
- deny items 2, 3, 25 and 27 for the reasons stated in the exhibit;
- grant items 23 and 24, which are being considered within the Commission's elk hunting rulemaking;

- grant item 26 for consideration in a future rulemaking; and
- deny all other proposals based on insufficient data and/or information to support the proposal.

Department: See Exhibit 2.

Exhibits

1. Petition 2021-017, received September 2, 2021
2. *Initial Assessment and Recommendations for Petition 2021-017 (Big Game Hunts)*, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, received January 5, 2023
3. Letter from Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife, received September 22, 2022
4. Email from Mike Costello, received December 28, 2022
5. Email from Dan Ryan, received December 29, 2022

Committee Direction/Recommendation

The Wildlife Resources Committee recommends that the Commission grant or deny the items in Petition 2021-017 as reflected in the Commission staff recommendation, and as discussed today.

Tracking Number: (2021-017)

To request a change to regulations under the authority of the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission), you are required to submit this completed form to: California Fish and Game Commission, (physical address) 1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1320, Sacramento, CA 95814, (mailing address) P.O. Box 944209, Sacramento, CA 94244-2090 or via email to FGC@fgc.ca.gov. Note: This form is not intended for listing petitions for threatened or endangered species (see Section 670.1 of Title 14).

Incomplete forms will not be accepted. A petition is incomplete if it is not submitted on this form or fails to contain necessary information in each of the required categories listed on this form (Section I). A petition will be rejected if it does not pertain to issues under the Commission's authority. A petition may be denied if any petition requesting a functionally equivalent regulation change was considered within the previous 12 months and no information or data is being submitted beyond what was previously submitted. If you need help with this form, please contact Commission staff at (916) 653-4899 or FGC@fgc.ca.gov.

SECTION I: Required Information.

Please be succinct. Responses for Section I should not exceed five pages

1. Person or organization requesting the change (Required)
Name of primary contact person: Dan Ryan
Address:
Telephone number:
Email address:

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Reference to the statutory or constitutional authority of the Commission to take the action requested: Sections 200, 203, 265, 460, 3051, 3452, 3453, 3953 and 4334, Fish and Game Code. Also see attached for more details

3. Overview (Required) - Summarize the proposed changes to regulations: See Attached. I was a part of an R# subcommittee with the department where we looked at creative ways to change the licensing system. Adding change to the big Game structure was one topic discussed but not finalized. I have been working with Department staff on new ideas for solving problems with the Big Game draw as well as providing additional opportunity for hunters. The Department needs to be adaptable and flexible. In the attachment I have provided a number of Big Game changes including new hunts and seasons. I am not asking that we try and implement all in 2022 however I would like to start the discussion and have a phased approach.

4. Rationale (Required) - Describe the problem and the reason for the proposed change:
Though the department has seen a decline in hunting license sales it has seen a substantial increase in hunter participation/demand in big game tags. To better serve the outdoor enthusiast in the state as well as provide additional opportunity with no incremental increase in harvest the department must adapt and make changes.

Why is this important?

- Millions of dollars are generated through the Big Game application and tag system. This system should evolve to meet demands and increase opportunity, or it will be at risk of losing participation. From 2014 to 2020 there has

been over 17,500 additional applications, this is a substantial amount of money and interest generated. It would not make sense to not try and adapt to the increase.

- CDFW needs to manage Big Game herds and hunters in a flexible manner. Not making adjustments on an annual or bi-annual basis is not effective, nor is that method of active management in responding to changing resource conditions/hunter preferences.
- The Big Game opportunities are stagnant and have not changed or been modified (other than annual season dates and tag allocations) for years. Stagnant environments tend to lead to decreased participation and missed opportunities for improvement.
- Other states such as Idaho, Nevada, Arizona and Wyoming are constantly adding opportunities based on biological resources and hunter demand and have been successful. The results speak for themselves and this approach has been proven to work.
- Big Game hunters as a whole are incredibly frustrated with the preference point system and the number of years it takes to draw a "premium hunt".
- Simply changing dates or adding a few premium hunts in general zones can increase draw odds and spread the point pool of applicants.
- Builds rapport with hunters and CDFW. Adds to the benefit of active management and responsiveness of the department to hunters.
- By spreading the already allocated tags to new hunts, this method should result in little change to overall harvest.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: 8/30/2021

6. Category of Proposed Change

[☐] Sport Fishing
[☐] Commercial Fishing
X Hunting
[☐] Other, please specify: [Click here to enter text.]

7. The proposal is to: (*To determine section number(s), see current year regulation booklet or https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs*)

X Amend Title 14 Section(s) [Sections 200, 203, 265, 460, 3051, 3452, 3453, 3953 and 4334, Fish and Game Code. Also see attached for more details]
X Add New Title 14 Section(s): Sections 200, 203, 265, 460, 3051, 3452, 3453, 3953 and 4334, Fish and Game Code. Also see attached for more details
[☐] Repeal Title 14 Section(s): [Click here to enter text.]

8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number of the previously submitted petition [Click here to enter text.]
Or X Not applicable.

9. Effective date: If applicable, identify the desired effective date of the regulation.
If the proposed change requires immediate implementation, explain the nature of the emergency: [The 2022 changes should be voted on in December in order for implementation to occur.]

10. Supporting documentation: Identify and attach to the petition any information supporting the proposal including data, reports and other documents: Attached proposal showing justification and work with CDFW, partners and members of the public.

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: Identify any known impacts of the proposed regulation change on revenues to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, individuals, businesses, jobs, other state agencies, local agencies, schools, or housing: All of these changes have direct and indirect impacts with communities, individuals, businesses, jobs and the department. They would generate additional revenue for the department as well as increase customer satisfaction.

12. Forms: If applicable, list any forms to be created, amended or repealed:

[Click here to enter text.]

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: [9/02/21]

FGC staff action:

- [☐] Accept - complete
- [☐] Reject - incomplete
- [☐] Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: [_____] Tracking Number

Meeting date for FGC consideration: [10/14/21 receive, 12/15-16/21 action]

FGC action:

- [☐] Denied by FGC
- [☐] Denied - same as petition [_____] Tracking Number
- [☐] Granted for consideration of regulation change

Petition for Big Game Hunt changes

Submitted By: Dan Ryan

Coordination with:
CDFW:
Brian Ehler
Nathan Graveline
Mark Abrahm
Lassen Fish and Game Commission

NGO:
Dale McDougal- California Deer Association
Kevin Vella- National Wild Turkey Federation

Public:
Over 15 members of the public have been apart of review and compilation of ideas going into this proposal.

Background:

I was a subcommittee leader for the 2019 R3 effort focusing on the Licensing restructuring. During this process our subcommittee generated creative ideas to simplify the licensing system and restructure some of the Big Game opportunities that have not been modified for decades.

Big Game opportunities are regulated through tag issuance. These tags are broken down throughout the state by locality, species, sex, time of year, method of take and whether its available for adults or apprentice (youth under 16). These tags/opportunities are allocated through the CDFW's online system where a user can purchase a hunting and fishing license as well as apply for tags.

Though the department has seen a decline in hunting license sales it has seen a substantial increase in hunter participation/demand in big game tags. To better serve the outdoor enthusiast in the state as well as provide additional opportunity with no incremental increase in harvest the department must adapt and make changes.

State	2014 Total Deer Applications	2019 Total Deer Applications	2020 Total Deer Applications
CA	71,810	81,513	89,403
*Estimates based on CDFW available data.			

What other states are doing:

This increase in demand is not unique to CA. All of the western states have seen substantial increases in the number of applicants entering the tag draws or purchasing tags. Nevada, Idaho and California are some that have seen the most substantial increases. Nevada and Idaho are looking of creative ways to provide additional opportunities without increasing harvest or negatively impacting big game populations long term. Changes are needed to reduce the increased frustration with the system as well

as ultimately not losing hunters/applicants in the future; the same hunters that will fund and advocate for conservation of our wildlife resources in the future.

Idaho adds, modifies, and removes big game tags/opportunities every season setting period (two years) based on local biologist recommendations and public input. This has allowed new hunts, season dates and opportunities to be provided and has in turn spread applications out based on hunter interest and changes in populations. Applicants are allowed one deer tag with an option to purchase second tags when available at a certain date or if tags are turned back by hunters that cannot participate in the hunt.

Nevada recently has seen a substantial increase in applicants in the past 5 years, they in turn have been implementing creative solutions for providing additional opportunity. Example: Starting in 2021, they are re-issuing tags that are turned back 30 days and less to hunters willing to go. This means if a tag is turned back the day before the season, they will work to reissue those, even if it happens during the season. It provides increased opportunity for hunters.

Why is this important?

- Millions of dollars are generated through the Big Game application and tag system. This system should evolve to meet demands and increase opportunity, or it will be at risk of losing participation. From 2014 to 2020 there has been over 17,500 additional applications, this is a substantial amount of money and interest generated. It would not make sense to not try and adapt to the increase.
- CDFW needs to manage Big Game herds and hunters in a flexible manner. Not making adjustments on an annual or bi-annual basis is not effective, nor is that method of active management in responding to changing resource conditions/hunter preferences.
- The Big Game opportunities are stagnant and have not changed or been modified (other than annual season dates and tag allocations) for years. Stagnant environments tend to lead to decreased participation and missed opportunities for improvement.
- Other states such as Idaho, Nevada, Arizona and Wyoming are constantly adding opportunities based on biological resources and hunter demand and have been successful. The results speak for themselves and this approach has been proven to work.
- Big Game hunters as a whole are incredibly frustrated with the preference point system and the number of years it takes to draw a “premium hunt”.
- Simply changing dates or adding a few premium hunts in general zones can increase draw odds and spread the point pool of applicants.
- Builds rapport with hunters and CDFW. Adds to the benefit of active management and responsiveness of the department to hunters.
- By spreading the already allocated tags to new hunts, this method should result in little change to overall harvest.

Increased harvest from “late” hunts

- There would be higher success in some of the proposed hunts below which occur during the “rut” breeding season. If tags and harvest is modeled and tag allocations are spread between hunts there would not likely be an increase in take in the zones.
- Reducing general tags to accommodate increase in higher success hunts would be easily done and allow for not net increase harvest.

Proposals

While there are many potential proposals, we would like to move the following forward some of the following for consideration for the 2022 Big Game hunting season**. A table is also provided of a proposed roll out in order to alleviate large workload of implementing multiple changes in one season.**

General

Party Applications Return Tags Rule

Current rule:

To return an elk, pronghorn, or bighorn sheep tag, you must mail the tag along with a written request for your preference points to be reinstated. The tag and request must be postmarked before the earliest date that the tag is valid for hunting. If approved, tag will be refunded (minus the 2021 nonrefundable processing fee of $31.93) and your preference points will be reinstated, plus one preference point for the species for the current license year (CCR T14-708.14(k)). To return a premium deer hunt tag, you must mail the tag along with a written request for your preference points to be reinstated. The tag must be postmarked before the earliest date the tag is valid for hunting. If the request is approved, your preference points will be reinstated, plus one preference point for deer for the current license year (CCR T14-708.14(j)). Premium deer hunt tags cannot be exchanged and are nonrefundable.

Proposed Change: Add Language

A person surrendering a tag awarded through a group application is eligible for the following:
(a) if all group members surrender their permits more than XX days before the start of the season for which the permit is valid, all group members may:
(i) have previously acquired preference points reinstated plus one for that years application period;
(ii) applicants may be eligible for a refund consistent with Section XXXX;
Notwithstanding the limitations in this section, a person who obtains a permit through a group application may surrender that permit after the opening date of the applicable hunting season and have previously acquired bonus points or preference points for the permit species restored, provided the person:
(a) is a member of United States Armed Forces or public health or public safety organization and is deployed or mobilized in the interest of national defense or national emergency;
(b) surrenders the permit to the department, with the tag attached and intact, or signs an affidavit verifying the permit is no longer in their possession within one year of the end of hunting season authorized by the permit; and
(c) satisfies the requirements for receiving a refund in Subsections R657-42-5(3)(c) and (d).

What does this prevent? Many in the hunting community refer to this as the "Grandma Rule" and it is utilized to circumvent the draw system. Example: John Doe has 0 points and his grandma has 12 points. They apply as a party for deer and have an average of 6 points (0+12/2). They are successful drawing X4. John Doe plans on hunting while Grandma returns tag and request for points to be reinstated. CDFW reinstates points she now has 13 points and John Doe has zero and goes on the hunt. John Doe can then apply with Grandma next year and split 13 points….This can be done over and over again allowing John to get tags year after year using grandmas points.

Party hunt members in a group application are able to return their party tag to the Department but will not receive a refund or Preference points unless all members of that party also return their tags to the Department.

Pro: Prevents the draw system from being circumvented, increases draw odds, creates fairness.
Con: Additional programming and workload to track.

Who else Does this? Nevada Department of Wildlife implemented this in 2020, Utah implemented in early 2000's.

Returned Tag Reissuance

Current Rule:

Hunters who have been issued a premium deer, elk, antelope, or a Bighorn sheep tag and cannot hunt may return their unused tag to the license and revenue branch by mail before opening day of the hunt. To return one of these tags, you must mail the unused tag along with a written request for your preference points to be reinstated postmarked before the earliest date that the tag is valid. If approved, the tag will be refunded, minus a processing fee, and your points reinstated, plus one for the current year. These tags are then issued to alternates. If tag is not accepted by the alternative the tag goes unused.

Proposed Change:

Elk, Sheep, Premium deer, and antelope tags returned by successful tagholders would be issued to alternates. If the tag is not accepted by the alternates then the tag would be made available and can be purchased online on a first-come first-serve basis. Tags that have seasons that have already started would still be available for those willing to accept the shorter timeframe and planning. Those who receive tags in this manner would forfeit preference points.

Pro: Tags have a less likely chance of going unused. Additional opportunity for unsuccessful hunters. Additional sales.

Cons: Additional work, online programming, and overhead cost.

Second Bear Tag Option

Current Rule:
Qualified individuals may purchase one bear tag per year. Tag quota, must cease hunting if bear harvest reaches quota.

Proposed Change:
Successful bear hunters upon completion of harvest report and CDFW validation may purchase a second Bear tag at $XX.XX. ***Potential addition: If bear harvest reaches 80% of quota no second tags would be issued.

Pro: Increases opportunity, sales, revenue, bear harvest.

Con: Additional work, could reach quota faster, preventing people with one bear tag to lose opportunity- Low probability since bear harvest have not reach quota since 2012.

General Deer Tag Archery/Rifle Separation

Background:

General A, B, D zones tags allow hunters to hunt during the general archery and general rifle seasons. There are three sets of hunters that utilize these tags:

1. Archery only hunters- Hunters that only participate in the archery season
2. Rifle only hunters- Hunters that only participate in the rifle season.
3. Combo Hunters- Hunters that participate in both archery and general seasons.

Problem:

- Wildland fires have closed public lands during the months of July through October. This has created a hardship for many of the hunters listed above as well as additional work for CDFW on returned tags.
- Many rifle hunters (#2) have been extremely upset since they cannot turn tags since the closures have happened after the archery season has already started.
- Archery hunters (#1) are upset that they are missing hunting opportunity with the early season being impacted.

Proposed Change

1. General A, B, D zones tags are only valid for the General rifle seasons.
2. Propose adding an additional date(s) to the Current AO (Archery Only) tag for each zone.

Example:

Hunters who purchase and Archery Only (AO) tag may hunt an additional 9* days starting the following day after the rifle season in that zone closes. *Days can be shorter

Zone D6 Example:

- General Rifle Tag Season- September 18 through October 31, 2021
- General AO Tag Season for D6- August 21 through September 12, 2021 & November 1-7
- Tag allocation: TBD

Pro

- Additional opportunity for Archery hunters.
- Additional opportunity for Archery hunters whose season was closed due to wildfire
- Allows general rifle only hunters to turn tags bag later since the season has not started.

Cons

- Combo hunters lose opportunity.
- Difficult to track/Confusing initial release to public.

***Propose doing this as a test in all zones or just some zones.

General Premium Zones

Proposed Change

<u>Split rifle C Zones</u>

Currently the C zones are lumped into one zone (C1-4). The zones currently have separate seasons established. While hunting occurs in all zones, C4 has the highest concentrations of hunters.

Current Tags

- C1-4- 8,150 tags

Proposed Tags- *Would be based on CDFW data.

- C1-1,766
- C2-1,766
- C3-1,766
- C4-2,852

Pros- C Zone tags are becoming harder to draw and if they were split it would allow hunters who want easier draw odds to look at the less popular zones such as C1-3. Spread applicants across zones, reduces hunter congestion and gives biologists better harvest data.

Cons- Reduces hunter flexibility by having to choose zone up front.

<u>Split Zones X3b</u>

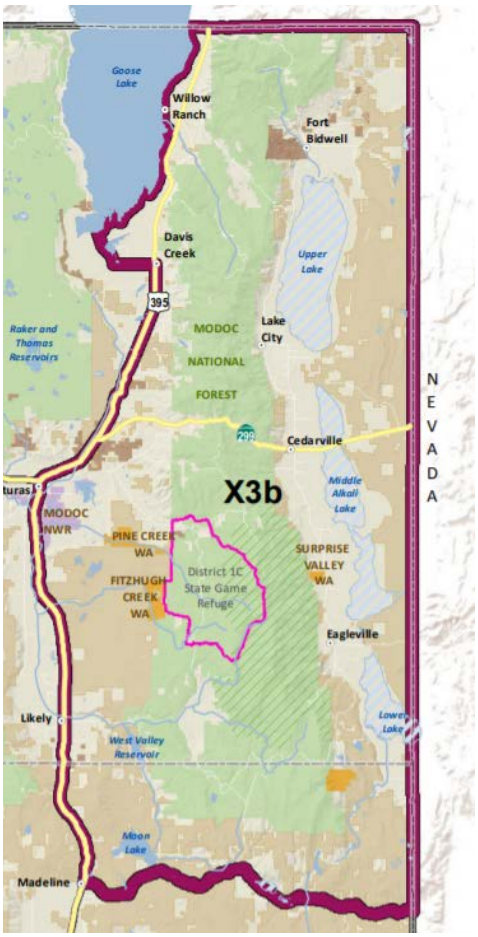
This zone is highly sought after and very large. There are high concentrations of use in specific portions of this zone leaving many portions of the unit not hunted or with low use. The zone has main roads that travers West to East through the Zone and could be used to split the zone into two. This would not result in a tag allocation increase but splits them based on population estimates.

Current Tag Allocations

- X3B-499

X3B North- Keep existing Northern, West and East Boundaries, however, change the southern boundary to Hwy 299**.** 220 tags

X3b South- Keep existing Southern, West and East Boundaries, however, change the Northern boundary to Hwy 299. 279 tags



Pros- Spreads draw applications. Adds two additional options for hunters to apply for therefore spreading the applications and cumulatively reducing preference point needed to draw other hunts.

Cons- Reduces tags in size and tag allocation in main unit. Reduces hunter's flexibility.

General Methods

Proposed Changes

1. **G40- A Zone North Late Rifle Tag**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and runs for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A North Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
2. **G41- A Zone South Late Rifle Tag** - 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A South Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
3. **G42- Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle**- 5-15 tags, Starts the last Wednesday in July and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the B1 & B3 zone within the Snow Mountain Wilderness. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone. Adds a unique opportunity for backcountry rifle hunters. Other states like Wyoming and Colorado have these same hunts.
4. **G43- Late Season Buck Hunt in d6**- 20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D6 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 10,000 tags that are allocated for D6 zone.
5. **G44- Late Season Buck Hunt in d7**-20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D7 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 9,000 tags that are allocated for D7 zone.

Muzzleloader

Proposed Changes

1. **M8- Bass Hill Boundary Change**- Allow hunters access to all of the X6a zone. Current M8 zone boundary is the Lassen County portion of X6A. There was no management reasoning for this. Originally the boundary was set for weather access and location of majority of the deer.
2. **M13- D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
3. **M14- D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
4. **M15- D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
5. **M16- Jackson State Forest Muzzleloader Buck Hunt**- 10-20 tags- Start the third Saturday in October and run for 9 consecutive days. Falls within the boundaries of the Jackson State forest in A Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone. Oregon has numerous late season blacktail hunts in dense forested zones. This could be similar.

Archery

Proposed Changes

Split Archery C Zones
Currently the C zones are lumped into one zone (C1-4). The zones currently have separate seasons established. While hunting occurs in all zones, C4 has the highest concentrations of hunters.
Current Tags

- C1-4- 1,945 tags,

Proposed Tags- Would be based on CDFW data.

- C1-400
- C2-400
- C3-400
- C4-745

Pros- C Zone tags are becoming harder to draw and if they were split it would allow hunters who want easier draw odds to look at the less popular zones such as C1-3. Spread applicants across zones. Give biologist better harvest data.
Cons- Reduces hunter flexibility by having to choose zone up front.

New Hunts

1. **A26- Bass Hill Late Archery Boundary Change**- Allow hunters access to all of the X6a zone. Current A26 zone boundary is the Lassen County portion of X6A. There was no management reasoning for this. Originally the boundary was set for weather access and location of majority of the deer.
2. **A34- King Range Late Archery Buck**- 10-20 tags. Runs the last Saturday in October and runs for 9 consecutive days. Hunt falls within B4 zone. Can hunt private and public lands within the B4 zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone. Oregon has numerous late season blacktail hunts in dense forested zones. This could be similar.
3. **A36- Late Archery buck in C1-C3**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after C3 rifle (latest date) and runs for 14 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the C1-C3 Zones. This tag allocation can be removed from the 12,870 tags that are allocated for C1-4 zones (includes rifle, general, archery and apprentice).

Apprentice

Proposed Changes

New Hunts

- **J23-Honey Lake Wildlife Area Early buck Rifle Hunt**- 5-10 tags. Apprentice can hunt on CDFW lands (Dakin & Fleming) wildlife areas. Starting the First Saturday in August and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the tags that are allocated for X6a.
- **J24- Late Season X4 hunt-** 10-20 tags. Start the First Saturday in November and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the 599 tags that are allocated for X4 zone.

Elk

Proposed Changes

Change Antlerless hunts in Marble Mountains and Siskiyou units. Increases hunter pressure during Bull hunts creates many hunter conflicts during the hunts and a poor hunt experience. Cow Elk opportunity is generally better in the late fall. Northeastern Elk Zone made this exact change a few years ago. Hunting cows during the breeding seasons could affect breeding patterns.

- Hunt Code 301- Marble Mountain Antlerless- ~~September 8-19~~ October 2-10 or later.
- Hunt Code 401- Siskiyou Antlerless- ~~September 8-19~~ October 2-10 or later.

Archery Opportunity- Provide an additional Archery opportunity for Tule Elk

- Grizzly Island Period 1 Either Sex- August 7-9

Non-resident opportunity

- Many non-residents do not participate in the Big Game Draw due to the fact that there is only One tag available for Elk and Antelope and 10% allocated for Sheep. The 10% rule should be for all three species. This would drive more non-resident applications while not impacting resident odds dramatically.

Alternate Back-up Dates or longer seasons

- If Public lands are closed due to wildfire tagholders would be allowed to utilize their tags during the current season or during another date later in the year
- Example1- Marble Mountains Elk Tags- September 8-19- USFS is closed, tagholders can turn their tag back or hunt for 2-3 weeks in October or November***TBD by CDFW staff
- Example 2- Siskiyou Elk Tag Dates- September 8 through November 30. Longer season allows for more opportunity as well as better success to meet Elk population objectives.

Bighorn Sheep

Add 2-4 tags allocated for Archery and Muzzleloader hunts Zone wide (Zones 1, 3, 10). These could also be conducted outside of the general season to reduce congestion.

- Currently the state has ranges with excess sheep. Once Sheep herds reach a certain population, they become more susceptible to disease. Removing excess sheep in higher population units would assist in reducing likelihood of disease.
- The 2019 ED that was completed by the department allowed for the cdfw to allocate additional tags for specific units. Some of these units are at the max of their allocations however other are not.
- Archery and muzzleloader is a more difficult method of take and offering up to 4 more tags could result in 100% take however it is unlikely.
- As shown in the below table, many of the units have 100's of sheep and would justify additional harvest.

Appendix 5: Desert Bighorn Sheep Surveys

Zone	Year	Survey Type	Number of Lambs	Number of Ewes	Number of Rams	Number of Unclassified	Total Counted
Marble Mountains & Clipper Mountains	2007	Helicopter	12	84	46	0	142
	2009	Helicopter	34	88	65	0	187
	2015	Helicopter	8	48	23	5	84
	2016	Ground	42	73	35	2	152
	2018	Ground	18	78	35	1	132
	2007	Helicopter	0	8	11	0	19
	2009	Helicopter	4	13	16	0	33
	2015	Helicopter	4	20	22	0	46
Clark Mountain Kingston Range	2007	Helicopter	0	31	18	0	49
	2009	Helicopter	0	12	8	0	20
	2015	Helicopter	0	1	3	0	4
	2016	Helicopter	1	31	13	5	50
	2007	Helicopter	3	27	21	0	51
	2009	Helicopter	6	33	20	0	59
	2015	Helicopter	9	25	14	0	48
	2016	Helicopter	3	31	19	2	55
	2018	Helicopter	5	80	34	0	119
White Mountains	2008	Helicopter	16	59	52	0	127
	2009	Helicopter	16	60	29	2	107
	2015	Ground	46	69	82	20	217
	2016	Ground	26	43	9	22	100
	2018	Ground	36	124	62	1	223
Cady Mountains	2007	Helicopter	12	59	38	0	109
	2009	Helicopter	37	92	38	0	167
	2010	Helicopter	23	102	49	0	174
	2018	Helicopter	8	58	27	0	93
Newberry, Rodman and Ord Mountains	2016	Helicopter	49	70	52	0	171
	2018	Helicopter	35	95	72	0	202

Proposal Table

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

Proposal Number (not in ranking order)	Proposal Name	Page Reference	Year Implemented
1	Party Application Rule	4	2022
2	Tag reissuance	5	2023
3	2nd Bear Tag	6	2022
4	General Rifle/Archery Deer tag separation	7	2023
5	Split C Zone General	8	2022
6	Split X3b	8	2023
7	G40- A Zone North Late Rifle Tag	10	2023
8	G41- A Zone South Late Rifle Tag	10	2023
9	G42- Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle	10	2024
10	G43- Late Season Buck Hunt in d6	10	2023
11	G44- Late Season Buck Hunt in d7	10	2023
12	M8- Bass Hill Muzzleloader Boundary Change	11	2022
13	M13- D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
14	M14- D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
15	M15- D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
16	M16- Jackson State Forest Muzzleloader Buck Hunt	11	2024
17	A26- Bass Hill Late Archery Boundary Change	12	2022
18	Split Archery (A1) C Zones	12	2022
19	A34- King Range Late Archery Buck	12	2023
20	A36- Late Archery buck in C1-C3	12	2022
21	J23-Honey Lake Wildlife Area Early buck Rifle Hunt	13	2022

22	J24- Late Season X4 hunt	13	2023
23	Marble & Siskiyou Antlerless Date Change	14	2022
24	Archery Grizzly Island Bull	14	2024
25	Alternate Elk dates for potential closures	14	2022
26	Archery BHS opportunity	15	2024

2022 Big Game Proposals

Completed by Dan Ryan in Coordination with Sportsman groups and Local CDFW Biologist.

Background

- CDFW R3 Committee- Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation
- Licensing structure committee identified the Big Game tags/hunts were outdated and need reform.
- Over 15 years of working with hunter groups and hearing frustrations about CDFW hunts.
- Collaborated with CDFW to ensure proposals meet goals and objectives of department.

Why?

- Hunter environment is changing and CDFW should adapt to the needs.
- More applicants- Close to 20K new applicants in the Big Game drawing since 2014 making draw odds tough.
- Create better hunt opportunity and quality to continue to recruit and retain hunters.
- Increase revenue for CDFW.
- Increase Draw odds for Big Game Drawing
- Build Rappor with Sportsman- Shows that the Department is listening to the sportsman's complaints and request.

General Changes

- <u>Party Applications Return Tags Rule</u>
  - Currently allows Any members of a party application to turn back a tag and get points reinstated.
  - Many use this rule to their advantage by putting in party members that have no intent to hunt.

  - Example: John Doe has 0 points, and his grandma has 12 points. They apply as a party for deer and have an average of 6 points (0+12/2). They are successful drawing X4. John Doe plans on hunting while Grandma returns tag and request for points to be reinstated. CDFW reinstates points she now has 13 points and John Doe has zero and goes on the hunt. John Doe can then apply with Grandma next year and split 13 points….This can be done over and over again allowing John to get tags year after year using grandma's points.

Returned Tag Reissuance

- Currently tags that are turned back are given to the alternates that were assigned through the drawing.
- It is unclear if this occurs on tags that are turned back the day prior to the season.

- Propose that CDFW make available tags turned back later, where by the time CDFW process the season has started and alternates are now available.

Example:
- John Doe drew a X4 tag. He is planning on going however has an emergency the week before the hunt that prevents him from going. John follows CDFW rules and turns the tag back the day prior to the season. CDFW takes 3-4 days to process this return and places the tag back on the open market via Aspira where sportsman can purchase first come first serve.
- Colorado, Idaho and Nevada do this process and it works nice for providing additional opportunity as well as additional revenue for the department.

Big Game Proposals

- **Second Bear Tag Option**

Qualified individuals may purchase one bear tag per year. Tag quota, must cease hunting if bear harvest reaches quota.

- **Proposed Change:**

Successful bear hunters upon completion of harvest report and CDFW validation may purchase a second Bear tag at $XX.XX. ***Potential addition: If bear harvest reaches 80% of quota no second tags would be issued.

General Premium Deer Hunts

Split rifle C Zones
Currently the C zones are lumped into one zone (C1-4). The zones currently have separate seasons established. While hunting occurs in all zones, C4 has the highest concentrations of hunters.
Current Tags
- C1-4- 8,150 tags

Proposed Tags- *Would be based on CDFW data.
- C1-1,766
- C2-1,766
- C3-1,766
- C4-2,852

- **Pros-** C Zone tags are becoming harder to draw and if they were split it would allow hunters who want easier draw odds to look at the less popular zones such as C1-3. Spread applicants across zones, reduces hunter congestion and gives biologists better harvest data.

- **Cons-** Reduces hunter flexibility by having to choose zone up front.

Split Zones X3b
- This zone is highly sought after and very large. There are high concentrations of use in specific portions of this zone leaving many portions of the unit not hunted or with low use. The zone has main roads that travers West to East through the Zone and could be used to split the zone into two. This would not result in a tag allocation increase but splits them based on population estimates.

Current Tag Allocations
- X3B-499
-

X3B North- Keep existing Northern, West and East Boundaries, however, change the southern boundary to Hwy 299**.** 220 tags

X3b South- Keep existing Southern, West and East Boundaries, however, change the Northern boundary to Hwy 299. 279 tags

Pros- Spreads draw applications. Adds two additional options for hunters to apply for therefore spreading the applications and cumulatively reducing preference point needed to draw other hunts.
Cons- Reduces tags in size and tag allocation in main unit. Reduces hunter's flexibility.

General Methods Deer Hunts

1. **G40- A Zone North Late Rifle Tag**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and runs for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A North Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
2. **G41- A Zone South Late Rifle Tag** - 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A South Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
3. **G42- Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle**- 5-15 tags, Starts the last Wednesday in July and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the B1 & B3 zone within the Snow Mountain Wilderness. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone. Adds a unique opportunity for backcountry rifle hunters. Other states like Wyoming and Colorado have these same hunts.
4. **G43- Late Season Buck Hunt in d6**- 20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D6 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 10,000 tags that are allocated for D6 zone.
5. **G44- Late Season Buck Hunt in d7**-20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D7 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 9,000 tags that are allocated for D7 zone.

Deer Muzzleloader Hunts

1. **M8- Bass Hill Boundary Change**- Allow hunters access to all of the X6a zone. Current M8 zone boundary is the Lassen County portion of X6A. There was no management reasoning for this. Originally the boundary was set for weather access and location of majority of the deer.
2. **M13- D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
3. **M14- D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
4. **M15- D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
5. **M16- Jackson State Forest Muzzleloader Buck Hunt**- 10-20 tags- Start the third Saturday in October and run for 9 consecutive days. Falls within the boundaries of the Jackson State forest in A Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone. Oregon has numerous late season blacktail hunts in dense forested zones. This could be similar.

Archery Deer Hunts

Split Archery C Zones
Currently the C zones are lumped into one zone (C1-4). The zones currently have separate seasons established. While hunting occurs in all zones, C4 has the highest concentrations of hunters.
Current Tags
- C1-4- 1,945 tags,

Proposed Tags- Would be based on CDFW data.
- C1-400
- C2-400
- C3-400
- C4-745

Pros- C Zone tags are becoming harder to draw and if they were split it would allow hunters who want easier draw odds to look at the less popular zones such as C1-3. Spread applicants across zones. Give biologist better harvest data.
Cons- Reduces hunter flexibility by having to choose zone up front.

1. **A26- Bass Hill Late Archery Boundary Change**- Allow hunters access to all of the X6a zone. Current A26 zone boundary is the Lassen County portion of X6A. There was no management reasoning for this. Originally the boundary was set for weather access and location of majority of the deer.
2. **A34- King Range Late Archery Buck**- 10-20 tags. Runs the last Saturday in October and runs for 9 consecutive days. Hunt falls within B4 zone. Can hunt private and public lands within the B4 zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone. Oregon has numerous late season blacktail hunts in dense forested zones. This could be similar.
3. **A36- Late Archery buck in C1-C3**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after C3 rifle (latest date) and runs for 14 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the C1-C3 Zones. This tag allocation can be removed from the 12,870 tags that are allocated for C1-4 zones (includes rifle, general, archery and apprentice).

Apprentice Deer Hunts

- **J23-Honey Lake Wildlife Area Early buck Rifle Hunt**- 5-10 tags. Apprentice can hunt on CDFW lands (Dakin & Fleming) wildlife areas. Starting the First Saturday in August and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the tags that are allocated for X6a.

- **J24- Late Season X4 hunt-** 10-20 tags. Start the First Saturday in November and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the 599 tags that are allocated for X4 zone.

Elk Hunts

Change Antlerless hunts in Marble Mountains and Siskiyou units. Increases hunter pressure during Bull hunts creates many hunter conflicts during the hunts and a poor hunt experience. Cow Elk opportunity is generally better in the late fall. Northeastern Elk Zone made this exact change a few years ago. Hunting cows during the breeding seasons could affect breeding patterns.

- Hunt Code 301- Marble Mountain Antlerless- ~~September 8-19~~ October 2-10 or later.
- Hunt Code 401- Siskiyou Antlerless- ~~September 8-19~~ October 2-10 or later.

Archery Opportunity- Provide an additional Archery opportunity for Tule Elk

- Grizzly Island Period 1 Either Sex- August 7-9

Non-resident opportunity

- Many non-residents do not participate in the Big Game Draw due to the fact that there is only One tag available for Elk and Antelope and 10% allocated for Sheep. The 10% rule should be for all three species. This would drive more non-resident applications while not impacting resident odds dramatically.

Alternate Back-up Dates or longer seasons

- If Public lands are closed due to wildfire tagholders would be allowed to utilize their tags during the current season or during another date later in the year
- Example1- Marble Mountains Elk Tags- September 8-19- USFS is closed, tagholders can turn their tag back or hunt for 2-3 weeks in October or November***TBD by CDFW staff
- Example 2- Siskiyou Elk Tag Dates- September 8 through November 30. Longer season allows for more opportunity as well as better success to meet Elk population objectives.

Sheep Hunts

Add 2-4 tags allocated for Archery and Muzzleloader hunts Zone wide (Zones 1, 3, 10). These could also be conducted outside of the general season to reduce congestion.

- Currently the state has ranges with excess sheep. Once Sheep herds reach a certain population, they become more susceptible to disease. Removing excess sheep in higher population units would assist in reducing likelihood of disease.
- The 2019 ED that was completed by the department allowed for the cdfw to allocate additional tags for specific units. Some of these units are at the max of their allocations however other are not.
- Archery and muzzleloader is a more difficult method of take and offering up to 4 more tags could result in 100% take however it is unlikely.
- As shown in the below table, many of the units have 100’s of sheep and would justify additional harvest.

Phased Approach

Proposal Number (not in ranking order)	Proposal Name	Page Reference	Year Implemented
1	Party Application Rule	4	2022
2	Tag reissuance	5	2023
3	2nd Bear Tag	6	2022
4	General Rifle/Archery Deer tag separation	7	2023
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7	G40- A Zone North Late Rifle Tag	10	2023
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9	G42- Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle	10	2024
10	G43- Late Season Buck Hunt in d6	10	2023
11	G44- Late Season Buck Hunt in d7	10	2023
12	M8- Bass Hill Muzzleloader Boundary Change	11	2022
13	M13- D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
14	M14- D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
15	M15- D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt	11	2022
16	M16- Jackson State Forest Muzzleloader Buck Hunt	11	2024
17	A26- Bass Hill Late Archery Boundary Change	12	2022
18	Split Archery (A1) C Zones	12	2022
19	A34- King Range Late Archery Buck	12	2023
20	A36- Late Archery buck in C1-C3	12	2022
21	J23-Honey Lake Wildlife Area Early buck Rifle Hunt	13	2022
22	J24- Late Season X4 hunt	13	2023
23	Marble & Siskiyou Antlerless Date Change	14	2022
24	Archery Grizzly Island Bull	14	2024
25	Alternate Elk dates for potential closures	14	2022
26	Archery BHS opportunity	15	2024

Thank you!

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)
Initial Assessment and Recommendations for Petition 2021-017 (Big Game Hunts)
Presented to the California Fish and Game Commission Wildlife Resources Committee
January 5, 2023

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
1	Party Applications Return of Tags Rule	Individuals in a party can return tag and get points reinstated.	All or none can return tag and request points.	Discussion and research does not show widespread abuse. Supportive of finding a solution to adress/close the loophole.	At the September 2022 WRC meeting, CDFW made recommendations regardiing preference points and refunds for hunting tags; this included a recomendation addressing a fix to the party applications return of tags rule - that individual party members may return tags only if their points are less than or equal to the party points average, and that all party members must return their tags for all points reinstatement.

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
2	Returned Tag Reissuance	Hunters are allowed to return tag prior to opening day for premium hunts, receive refund and points reinstated for elk, pronghorn and bighorn tags.	Establish Alternate list.	For Elk, Pronghorn, and Bighorn Sheep tags, all applicants are potential alternates and returned tags are offered to alternates by their draw rank. Very rarely a tag will go unissued due to the returned tag coming in too late to be practical to reissue. Premium deer tags are not refundable. Returns are only accepted for preference point reinstatement and with the exception of areas with fire closures, tags must be returned prior to the season opener to be eligible. Around 100 tags are returned annually. Alternate lists are not maintained as hunters applying for the hunt unsuccessfully have generally already been issued another tag after the draw. With the small volume of returns, the cost of reissuance is not economical.	Reject this proposed change.
3	Second Bear Tag Option	Only 1 bear tag per hunter	Allow 2nd bear tag to be purchased after first tag has been filled and reported.	The Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan is currently being revised with a draft expected by May 2023. The revised plan will include an improved method for estimating and monitoring bear populations and guidance on how this information would be used to recommend any changes to bear harvest.	CDFW recommendation is to reject any bear regulatory changes, including this proposal at this time, pending completion of the revised bear management plan.
4	General Deer Tag Archery/Rifle Separation - A, B, D Zones	Hunters are allowed to hunt both archery and general season with the same tag.	Separate Archery and General tags. Require an archery-only tag for archery season in A, B, D zones. Add late archery hunt for archery-only tag holders.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
5	Split Rifle C Zones (Deer)	Zones are lumped together.	Split out individual zones	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
6	Split Zone X3B (Deer)	Very large zone.	Split into North and South zones	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
7	G40 - A Zone North Late Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late seasson to A Zone North	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
8	G41 - A Zone South Late Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late seasson to A Zone South	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
9	G42 - Snow Mt Early Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
10	G43 - Late D6 Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Late Season Buck Hunt Zone D6	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
11	G44 - Late D7 Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Late Season Buck Hunt Zone D7	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
12	M8 - Bass Hill Boundary Chage (Deer)	Currently limited to Lassen County	Allow access to the rest of Zone X6A during the M8 hunt	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
13	M13 - D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late season muzzleloader hunt to Zone D3	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
14	M14 - D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late season muzzleloader hunt to Zone D4	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
15	M15 - D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late season muzzleloader hunt to Zone D5	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
16	M16 - Jackson State Muzzleloader Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add muzzleloader hunt.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
17	Split Archery C Zones (Deer)	Currently combined into one hunt area C1-C4	Split out individual zones.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
18	A26 - Bass Hill Late Archery (Deer)	Currently hunters are limited to Lassen County portion of Zone X6A	Add access to all of Zone X6A.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
19	A34 - King Range Late Archery (Deer)	N/A	Add late archery hunt for B4 Zone.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
20	A36 - C1-C3 Late Archery (Deer)	N/A	Add late archery hunt for C1, C2, C3 zones.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
21	J23 - Honey Lake Wildlife Area (WA) Apprentice Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add early rifle on the Dakin and Fleming units of Honey Lake WA	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
22	J24 - Late Season X4 Apprentice Hunt (Deer)	N/A	Add late season appentice hunt for X4.	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	No recommendation at this time.
23	Elk Antlerless Season Change	Marble Mountain and Skskiyou antlerless hunts run concurrently with bull hunts.	Move antlerless hunts after the bull hunt.	CDFW is currently proposing changes to elk hunting regulations. These include increasing the antlerless tag quota and adjusting the bull season dates in the Siskiyou Roosevelt Elk Hunt Zone.	CDFW presented a proposed regulation change at the December 2022 Commission meeting.
24	Grizzly Island Wildlife Area (GIWA) Antlerless Archery Elk Hunt	N/A	Add archery-only antlerless hunt to GIWA	This proposal may be warranted, but an analysis is needed to assess potential biological effects and implications to hunter opportunity.	CDFW presented a proposed regulation change at the December 2022 Commission meeting.
25	Non-resident elk opportunity	Claims there is only one tag available for non-resident elk.	Allocate 10% of elk tags for non-resident hunters.	Fish and Game Code Section 332(e) limits nonresident elk tags to one, the same is true for antelope(Fish and Game Code Section 331 (e)). This is not true of bighorn sheep and Title 14 allows for up to 10% of general lottery bighorn sheep tags to go to nonresidents.	Reject this proposed change, which is limited by statute.
26	Alternate seasons or longer seasons for elk	Current seasons.	Provide alternate hunt dates for hunts that are closed due to wildfire.	CDFW is considering alternatives to current hunting seasons to avoid impacts of fire-related closures and this proposal may be warranted.	CDFW continues to evaluate the proposal. No recommendation at this time.

Item #	Petition Request	Current Rule	Proposed Change from Petition 2021-017	Initial Assessment by CDFW Staff	Initial Recommendation by CDFW Staff
27	Archery and Muzzleloader Desert Bighorn Sheep Hunts	N/A	Add archery and muzzleloader tags/seasons for sheep.	Hunt opportunities are extremely limited, 27 general tags for 20,000 applicants. Archery and muzzleloader are existing methods of take for bighorn sheep. Allocating method specific tag would limit a hunt opportunity to the majority of the constituency base.	Reject this proposed change, because opportunities are already very limited.

CITIZENS FOR LOS ANGELES WILDLIFE
CLAW
PO Box 50003 Studio City, CA 91614
(818) 821-6000 info@clawonline.org www.clawonline.org

September 22, 2022

Samantha Murray, President
California Fish and Game Commission
715 P Street, 16th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814
Via: fgc@fgc.ca.gov

Introduction of a Second Bear Tag in Regulation Change Petition (2021-017) – OPPOSED!

Dear President Murray and Commissioners:

Citizens for Los Angeles Wildlife (CLAW) is a non-profit environmental organization concerned with the wellbeing of wildlife and wildlife habitat for the City of Los Angeles and beyond. A citizenry of more than 5,000 individuals support our organization's multiple calls for biodiverse practices and policy to benefit LA City, County, California and the globe. CLAW strongly opposes the portion of the Petition for Regulation Change (2021-017) that would allow for a second bear tag.

Earlier this year, CLAW commented in support of the petition to place a moratorium on black bear hunting in California (2021-027), which was well supported both by science and public sentiment. At that time, an update to the 25-year-old Bear Management Plan was promised by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). As CDFW is still in the early stages of updating the Plan, it leaves one to wonder how the Department and Commission could possibly justify increasing bear tags at this time. Yet, presently, the Commission is considering this petition, which would double the amount of bears that hunters can kill, despite the fact that nothing has changed since the public hearing of February: No new studies have been completed examining the threats that our record breaking climate crisis is placing on bears, and how it will worsen in the future. Moreover, a vast majority of Californians are still strongly opposed to hunting black bears. Clearly, this petition for tag increases comes from a fringe group that seeks to put their interest before the public's interest for a thriving bear population – a bear population that provides California with a slew of ecosystem services and economic benefits.

In the 1930's, the California Department of Fish and Game (as it was then called) relocated black bears to expand their range across California. The reason for this action was that the California Grizzly had recently been declared extinct, which resulted in an ecological imbalance and a landscape lacking the numerous crucial ecosystem services that the grizzly provided (such as improving soil quality, propagating seeds, and controlling prey populations). Black bears now fill in for some of those critical ecosystem services, while the California Grizzly only graces our state flag symbolically, a perpetual reminder to Californians of the fragility of our ecosystems and the relative ease at which wildlife can become extinct due to human mismanagement. Today, the same unwarranted fear based on inaccurate stereotypes that led to the grizzly's demise leads hunters to kill our omnivorous and mostly docile black bears. This hunting occurs not only in rural farming areas, where hunters can ostensibly claim depredation, but even urban areas like Los Angeles County, where 14 bears were killed in 2020. This number is not only alarmingly high, but arbitrary as there is no sound science to support bear hunting under the guise of wildlife management. Furthermore, bear hunting is wildly unpopular among California residents, with 70% of Californians opposing hunting black bears for sport.

If we are not going to keep black bear hunting numbers at zero like we should be, then we should at the very least keep the number as close to zero as possible, especially until sound science, and not arbitrary opinions, can support the issuance of hunting permits.

Sincerely,

Tony Tucci, Chair

CLAW is a public benefit non-profit 501(c)(3) environmental organization that works to protect and restore the environments of wildlife of Los Angeles and California from dwindling open spaces. Our mission is to promote, educate and protect the fundamental importance of wildlife, wildlife habitats and wildlife corridors everywhere.

From: Michael Costello <[redacted]>
Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 03:45 PM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Subject: Feedback for Jan 11/12 WRC Meeting

WARNING: This message is from an external source. Verify the sender and exercise caution when clicking links or opening attachments.

Hello Commissioners and WRC participants. I'm writing to offer support for several items on the agenda @ the Jan 11/12 meeting. While I do not represent any specific group of hunters or organization, I have participated in the WRC workshops and I have communicated with 100s of other hunters on these issues via social media, email and 1:1 conversations. **I believe it is safe to say that a majority of hunters in CA support the below recommendations.**

***

Comments on Agenda items:

Item #5 Petition 2021-017 Please take action in support of the following, by forwarding the below initiatives to the full Commission and ultimately to the CDFW for implementation.

- 2nd bear tag - Fall 2023; make a 2nd tag available to any hunter, as an "over the counter" purchase, until the earliest of 1600 bears reported taken OR Dec. 1 of the hunt year.

- Modernized "party application" tag return process to eliminate the "grandma loophole".

- Modernized returned tag-sales process, to ensure maximum use (and revenue) of allocated Premium tags

- Create new Premium hunts (G40, G41, G42, G43, G44; M13, M14, M15, M16; A34, A36); by removing fewer than 2% of current tag allocations in these A/B/C/D zones and converting them to a smaller allocation of Premium hunts we will offer new high-success opportunities which maintain hunter engagement and drive new hunts that reward participation in the Big Game Draw.

Item #11-A Wildlife Branch Bear Mgmt Plan

- Request the Dept to **incorporate a 2nd bear tag opportunity** into the forthcoming bear mgmt plan.
- Request the Dept to **feature data and details on methods of take and season structure(s) which are not currently available to CA** for management, conservation and hunting purposes. An objective discussion of things such as spring hunts, hound hunting and baiting is needed in this mgmt plan, in order to inform future conversations and decisions the Commission and/or Legislature may be faced with.

***

Thank you, I look forward to hearing the discussion on these topics during the meeting.

Mike Costello
Hunting Ain't Easy
[redacted]

From: DAN RYAN <[redacted]>
Sent: Thursday, December 29, 2022 7:10 AM
To: FGC <FGC@fgc.ca.gov>
Subject: Fwd: 2021-017 Petition Items Ranked in Priority

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Comissionors, WRC and Department staff. please include this into the public comment for January 11th meeting. Many of the items in my petition, nearly all are to be recommended for further analysys by the department, while i appreciate and support what the department is doing for additional elk hunting I feel like there are some big changes that can be done with minimal effort. I understand this is a work in progress and cant thank wrc, cdfw and the comission for being very welcoming during this petion effort. I want the department to build a strong rappor with the hunting community and feel that some of these smaller items will do just that. I ask the WRC to move forward with some of the recommended changes i attached in the ranked list. Thank you and look forward to working with you all.

2021-017- Petition for Big Game Hunt changes

Petition items listed below in priority order

1. **Returned Tag Reissuance**
    - **FGC Action**- Recommend CDFW report on the number of Deer, pronghorn, Elk and Sheep tags that have been returned and not reissued for the past 5 years. Based on this number recommend that the department reach out to the license contractor to create a program to reissue those tags. This has been done with numerous contractors and could modeled similar to the Nevada Department of Wildlife tag reissuance program which was implemented in 2021.
    - CDFW data shows that is 2021 shows that:
        - 809 X-Zone general deer tags were not issued. Many of these were due to fire closures but many of these tags could have been reissued to hunters that would have used the tags.
2. **Bass Hill Muzzleloader and Archery Boundary Change**-
    - **FGC Action**: Recommend approval for boundary adjustment for both M8 & A26 hunts.
    - The current boundary (Lassen County portion of X6A) for these hunts were established in the 90's with no scientific reasoning. The boundary was established based on where the deer traditionally ranged during the hunt season (Lassen County portion of X6A is lower elevation). In the past decade, the deer have ranged throughout the entire zone during the seasons. By expanding the boundary to include the entire X6A zone the department would provide additional opportunity and quality of an experience. The proposed language is included:
    - 360(C)(21)- (21) M-8 (Bass Hill Muzzleloading Rifle Buck Hunt).

(A) Area: ~~That portion of Lassen County within the area described as Zone X-6a (see subsection 360(b)(8)(A)).~~ In those portions of Lassen and Plumas counties within a line beginning at the junction of Highway 147 and Highway 36 near Westwood; east on Highway 36 to Conservation Center Road at Susanville (County Road A-27); east on Conservation Center Road to Highway 395 at the town of Litchfield; east on Highway 395 to the Wendel-Pyramid Lake Road (County Road 320); east on the Wendel-Pyramid Lake Road to the Nevada-California state line; south on the Nevada-California state line to the UP-WP railroad line near Herlong; west on the UP-WP railroad line to the Herlong Access Road (County Road A-25) at Herlong; west on the Herlong Access Road to Highway 395; north on Highway 395 to County Road 336 at Milford; southwest on County Road 336 to U.S. Forest Service Road 26N16 near the Plumas-Lassen county line; west on Forest Service Road 26N16 to Forest Service Road 28N03 at Doyle Crossing; west on Forest Services Road 28N03 to Forest Service Road 29N43 near Antelope Lake; south on Forest Service Road 29N43 to County Road 111 at Flournoy Bridge; south on County Road 111 to Forest Service Road 24N08; south on Forest Service Road 24N08 to County Road 112 at Lake Davis; south on County Road 112 to Highway 70; west on Highway

70 to the Highway 89 junction at Blairsden; west on Highway 89/70 to the Greenville Y west of Quincy; northwest on Highway 89 to Highway 147 at Canyon Dam; north on Highway 147 to the point of beginning.

- 361(b)(23) - (23) A-26 (Bass Hill Archery Buck Hunt).
  (A) Area: ~~That portion of Lassen County within the area described as Zone X-6a (see subsection 360(b)(8)(A)).~~ In those portions of Lassen and Plumas counties within a line beginning at the junction of Highway 147 and Highway 36 near Westwood; east on Highway 36 to Conservation Center Road at Susanville (County Road A-27); east on Conservation Center Road to Highway 395 at the town of Litchfield; east on Highway 395 to the Wendel-Pyramid Lake Road (County Road 320); east on the Wendel-Pyramid Lake Road to the Nevada-California state line; south on the Nevada-California state line to the UP-WP railroad line near Herlong; west on the UP-WP railroad line to the Herlong Access Road (County Road A- 25) at Herlong; west on the Herlong Access Road to Highway 395; north on Highway 395 to County Road 336 at Milford; southwest on County Road 336 to U.S. Forest Service Road 26N16 near the Plumas-Lassen county line; west on Forest Service Road 26N16 to Forest Service Road 28N03 at Doyle Crossing; west on Forest Services Road 28N03 to Forest Service Road 29N43 near Antelope Lake; south on Forest Service Road 29N43 to County Road 111 at Flournoy Bridge; south on County Road 111 to Forest Service Road 24N08; south on Forest Service Road 24N08 to County Road 112 at Lake Davis; south on County Road 112 to Highway 70; west on Highway 70 to the Highway 89 junction at Blairsden; west on Highway 89/70 to the Greenville Y west of Quincy; northwest on Highway 89 to Highway 147 at Cany on Dam; north on Highway 147 to the point of beginning.

3. **Elk Season Dates**
   - **FGC Action**: Recommend extending Elk hunt season dates to accommodate potential fire closures. While there are some overlaps with antlerless hunts the longer seasons would create no issues with hunter crowding. The list of Elk Hunts, existing seasons (strikethrough) and proposed season is below:

Subsection 364

- R(3)(A)(B), V(1)(A) Marble Mountains Bull/Antlerless/Apprentice - Shall open on the Wednesday preceding the second Saturday in September and continue for ~~12~~ **60** consecutive days.
- Y(1)(A) Marble Mountain Muzz/Archery- Shall open on the last Saturday in ~~October~~ **November** and extend for ~~9~~ **30** consecutive days.
- R(1)(A)(B) Siskiyou Bull and Antlerless- Shall open on the Wednesday preceding the second Saturday in September and continue for ~~12~~ **90** consecutive days.
- S(1)(A)(B), V(2)(A) Northeastern General Bull/Apprentice- The bull season shall open on the Wednesday preceding the third Saturday in September and continue for ~~12~~ **30** consecutive days.

- W(1)(A) Northeastern Archery- Shall open on the Wednesday preceding the first Saturday in September and continue for 12 consecutive days. **Shall reopen the last Saturday is October and continue for 60 consecutive days**.
- U(1)(A)(B), V(3)(A) Cache Creek Bull/Antlerless/Apprentice - Shall open on the second Saturday in October and continue for ~~16~~ **60** consecutive days.
- U(13)(A) East Park Reservoir- Shall open on the first Saturday in September and continue for ~~27~~ **60** consecutive days.
- U(16)(A)(B) Lake Pillsbury Bull and Antlerless - Shall open Monday following the fourth Saturday in September and continue for ~~10~~ **60** consecutive days.

4. **General Deer Tag additional hunts**
   - **FGC Action**: Recommend that CDFW implement a minimum of **three** of the below opportunities in the 2023 season cycle. Updates to deer management plan are not needed for this action since no net take increase is proposed and is very low-risk.
   - These hunts are listed in the petition under General, muzzleloader and Archery. Some have been changed to accommodate traditional archery.
   - All hunts method of take could be modified based on CDFW's approach. Example: making more of the opportunities archery if increase take concern is determined.

Rational for tag allocations and no net increase in take:

General Example:

A Zone South Late Rifle Tag:

- Propose allocating 35 Rifle tags
- Projected 60% harvest success would result in 21 bucks being harvested.
- Existing A Zone General Tag Quota: 65,000
- A Zone Tags issued in 2021: 28,777
- A Zone estimated harvest/success in 2021: 7,921, 27.5% success rate.
- 75 tags would be removed from the A zone general tag quota to accommodate for this hunts projected take to ensure that the hunt does not result in increased take. Additional general tags could be removed if a more conservative approach were to be taken.
- Lower harvest/success is projected for proposed traditional archery hunts which could allow for additional opportunities.

- **Opportunities**
  - **A Zone North Late Traditional Archery Tag**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and runs for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A North Zone. This tag

allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.

- **A Zone South Late Rifle Tag** - 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after A zone rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the A South Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
- **Snow Mountain Wilderness Early Rifle**- 5-15 tags, Starts the last Wednesday in July and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the B1 & B3 zone within the Snow Mountain Wilderness. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone.
- **Late Season rifle Buck Hunt in d6**- 20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D6 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 10,000 tags that are allocated for D6 zone.
- **Late Season rifle Buck Hunt in d7**-20-50 tags, Starts the first Saturday in November and runs for 5 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the D7 Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 9,000 tags that are allocated for D7 zone**.**
- **D3 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D3 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
- **D4 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D4 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
- **D5 Late Muzzleloader Hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the following Saturday after D5 rifle and run for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 33,000 tags that are allocated for D3-5 zone.
- **Jackson State Forest Muzzleloader Buck Hunt**- 10-20 tags- Start the third Saturday in October and run for 9 consecutive days. Falls within the boundaries of the Jackson State forest in A Zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 65,000 tags that are allocated for A zone.
- **King Range Late Traditional Archery Buck**- 20-30 tags. Runs the last Saturday in October and runs for 9 consecutive days. Hunt falls within B4 zone. Can hunt private and public lands within the B4 zone. This tag allocation can be removed from the general 35,000 tags that are allocated for B zone. This could be expanded to B zone wide.
- **Late Archery buck in C1-C3**- 15-35 tags, Starts the following Saturday after C3 rifle (latest date) and runs for 14 consecutive days. Tag is good for all public and private lands within the C1-C3 Zones. This tag allocation can be removed from the 12,870 tags that are allocated for C1-4 zones (includes rifle, general, archery and apprentice).

- **Apprentice Honey Lake Wildlife Area Early buck Rifle Hunt**- 5-10 tags. Apprentice can hunt on CDFW lands (Dakin & Fleming) wildlife areas. Starting the First Saturday in August and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the tags that are allocated for X6a or determine by local biologist since the wildlife area is currently not open to X6a deer hunting.
- **Apprentice Late Season X4 hunt**- 10-20 tags. Start the First Saturday in November and runs for 9 consecutive days. This tag allocation can be removed from the 599 tags that are allocated for X4 zone.

5. **Party Applications Turn Back rule (Grandma loophole)**
    - **FGC Action**- Recommend language be added to 2023-2024 regulations. Easy change widely supported- Proposed language is:

A person surrendering a tag awarded through a group application is eligible for the following:
(a) if all group members surrender their permits more than XX days before the start of the season for which the permit is valid, all group members may:
(i) have previously acquired preference points reinstated plus one for that years application period;
(ii) applicants may be eligible for a refund consistent with Section XXXX;
Notwithstanding the limitations in this section, a person who obtains a permit through a group application may surrender that permit after the opening date of the applicable hunting season and have previously acquired bonus points or preference points for the permit species restored, provided the person:
(a) is a member of United States Armed Forces or public health or public safety organization and is deployed or mobilized in the interest of national defense or national emergency;
(b) surrenders the permit to the department, with the tag attached and intact, or signs an affidavit verifying the permit is no longer in their possession within one year of the end of hunting season authorized by the permit; and
(c) satisfies the requirements for receiving a refund in Subsections R657-42-5(3)(c) and (d).

6. **Second Bear Tag**
    - **FGC Action**- Recommend that CDFW make available a second bear tag for all hunters or successful hunters.
    - Sales would cease once the 1,700 take quota is met for the 2023 season.
    - CDFW could monitor this closely to determine if there are any impacts or increased net harvest.
    - Potential pilot program while bear management plan is in process.
7. **Archery Only Elk Opportunity on Grizzly Island**
    - **FGC Action**- Recommend that CDFW plan for an additional archery-only opportunity for 2024 season
8. **Archery/Muzzleloader Sheep opportunity**

- **FGC Action-** Recommend that CDFW plan for an additional archery-only opportunity for 2024 season

9. **Split Rifle C Zones**
    - **FGC Action-** Recommend that CDFW publicly scope this proposal for the potential opportunity for 2024 season.
10. **Split Archery C Zones**
    - **FGC Action-** Recommend that CDFW publicly scope this proposal for the potential opportunity for 2024 season.
11. **Split Zone X3b**
    - **FGC Action-** Recommend that CDFW publicly scope this proposal for the potential opportunity for 2024 season.
12. **General Deer Tag/Archery Separation**
    - **FGC Action-** Recommend that CDFW publicly scope this proposal for the potential opportunity for 2025 season.
13. **Additional based on public comments**
    - **Marble Mountain EMU Elk Tag Additional Opportunities**
    - **<u>FGC Action</u>**: Recommend CDFW increase elk hunting opportunity and move people through the draw process through the creation of new hunts.
    - CDFW acknowledges elk population in Marble Mountain EMU is growing
    - Modern archery elk hunting has an average %20 success rate in other states for hunts occurring during the rut. Hunting outside the rut has a lower success rate.
    - Traditional Archery method has an even lower success rate than modern archery.
    - FGC & CDFW will have to define "traditional archery". For example, "single string bows (recurves, longbows, selfbows) free of any mechanical assistance to propel the string other than the bending of the bow's limbs, *e.g.*¸cams or pulleys. Bows lacking any electronic device used to aid the shooter."

      Marble Mountain EMU Traditional Archery Either Sex
      - Propose adding a new hunt with 10 tags
      - Two week season November 8-21