



Tracking Number: (2025-04)

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: David Bess

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers Legislative/Regulatory Chair

Address:

Telephone number:

Email address:

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Reference to the statutory or constitutional authority of the Commission to take the action requested: California Fish and Game Code Section 200

3. Overview (Required) - Summarize the proposed changes to regulations:

Adding a second bear tag to Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 708.12 - Bear License Tags. New language added in blue.

Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 708.12 - Bear License Tags

(a) Bear License Tags:

(1) With the exception of permits and tags issued pursuant to section 4181 of the Fish and Game Code, all bear license tags shall be available to the public through the department's Automated License Data System terminals at any department license agent or department license sales office.

(2) The department shall require that the specified fee provided for in section 4751 of the Fish and Game Code for such bear license tags be paid as a prerequisite to obtaining a bear license tag.

(3) The department shall charge a nonrefundable processing fee, as specified in Section [702](#), for each bear license tag.

(4) ~~Applicants may purchase only one bear license tag during any one license year. Any person who purchases more than one bear license tag may be denied bear license tags for the current license year.~~ Applicants may



purchase only two bear license tags during any one license year. Any person who purchases more than two bear license tags may be denied bear license tags for the current license year.

(5) Upon the killing of any bear, that person shall immediately fill out all portions of the tag including the report card completely, legibly, and permanently, and cut out or punch out and completely remove notches or punch holes for the month and date of the kill. The bear license tag shall be attached to the ear of the bear and kept attached during the open season and for 15 days thereafter.

4. Rationale (Required) - Describe the problem and the reason for the proposed change:

RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT OF CALIFORNIA’S BLACK BEAR POPULATION AND A SECOND BEAR TAG

WHEREAS pursuant to the Black Bear Conservation Plan published by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), “black bears are widespread and common throughout most forested habitats of California; they are one of the most commonly occurring large mammal species in California forests;” (California Department of Fish & Wildlife. (2025). Black bear Management Plan. State of California. p. 30); and

WHEREAS “common species, such as black bears in California, have substantial effects on the broader ecological community such that the conservation of common species should be considered alongside concerns about rare species (Gaston and Fuller 2007)” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 19); and

WHEREAS “within California, Monteith et al. (2014) found neonate mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) born west of the Sierra Crest, where black bear densities are higher than east of the Sierra crest, were >6 times more likely to die of black bear predation than any other cause. High rates of black bear predation were thought to limit deer abundance in this area by causing a reduction in the proportion of deer that migrate to summer range, as deer trade off obtaining superior nutritional benefits to avoid predation (Monteith et al. 2014). Black bear predation is also a common cause of mortality for black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) fawns in the Mendocino National Forest (Wittmer et al. 2014)” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 30); and

WHEREAS “within the Mendocino National Forest, black bears frequently displace mountain lions from their kills, a behavior called kleptoparasitism. Elbroch et al. (2015) found black bears at 77% of mountain lion kills, and black bears displaced mountain lions from them 72% of the time. Black bear kleptoparasitism caused mountain lions to increase their kill rates substantially to recoup energetic losses to black bears (Elbroch et al. 2015, Allen et al. 2021). Collectively, high rates of predation on fawns and kleptoparasitism of mountain lion kills by black bears have likely contributed to a declining deer population in this area (Wittmer et al. 2014, Marescot et al. 2015)” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 30-31); and

WHEREAS “partnerships between CDFW and hunting-focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play important roles in habitat creation and protection that benefit a wide variety of species. Specific to black bears, hunters also provide CDFW with tooth samples from harvested animals (over 1,000 samples annually). Age estimates from these samples constitute a key source of scientific data that is critical to efficient estimation and monitoring of black bear populations throughout California.” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 10); and



WHEREAS “Black bears are classified as a game mammal in California (FGC § 3950) such that regulated hunting of the species includes licensing, fees, harvest season and area, and other restrictions (Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) § 365, 366, 367.5, FGC § 4750-4763)” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p.10); and

WHEREAS “Over the last 10 years (2014-2023), an average of 29,245 black bear tags were sold annually which generated \$13.3 million in revenue, ranging from \$1.0 million to \$1.7 million per year. Additionally, pursuant to the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, a federal tax on firearms and ammunitions sales allocates between \$10 and \$30 million per year to wildlife and wildlife habitat conservation in California. CDFW uses a portion of these funds to staff its conservation and hunting programs for black bears and other game species. For example, over the last 10 years (2014-2023), the amount of these state and federal funds that CDFW has used annually for staff, contracts, and procurement of equipment such as GPS collars has varied between \$500,000 and \$4 million.” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 27); and

WHEREAS “the maximum sustainable annual hunting mortality rate for black bears has been estimated to be as high as 15.9% (Miller 1990), although Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin have reported increasing or stable black bear populations with harvest rates >20% (Hristienko and McDonald 2007). Based on current best estimates of black bear populations statewide and regionally, hunters harvest less than 5% annually of the bears present in any BCR of the state, and under 3% overall (see Section 4.2). This harvest rate is considerably lower than the maximum sustainable harvest rates discussed above and is also lower than recent harvest rates in nearby states such as Oregon (ODFW 2022) and Washington (WDFW 2022).” (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 26-27); and

WHEREAS “black bears are culturally significant to many Native American Tribes, are a favored game species to many hunters, are sought after for viewing and photography opportunities, and are widely recognized for their intrinsic value and ecological role as an omnivorous predator. Black bears can also be a source of conflict when they use areas of high human activity (i.e., they become habituated to people), seek out anthropogenic food sources and cause property damage (i.e., they become food-conditioned), prey upon livestock, contribute to reducing ungulate populations (Monteith et al. 2014, Wittmer et al. 2014) below desired management thresholds, or threaten public safety through aggressive or predatory behavior,” and CDFW currently estimates the black bear population to be 59,851 which is more than twice the previous population estimate that was used to establish an annual harvest quota of 1700 bears. (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2025, p. 9)

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT we the undersigned individuals and organizations respectfully request the California Fish & Game Commission uphold its commitment to science-based management of fish and wildlife by utilizing the powers delegated to it by the legislature and ensure sustainable harvest of black bears according to the quota established by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife;

NOW BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, we the undersigned individuals and organizations respectfully request the California Fish & Game Commission promptly receive and refer the petition from Backcountry Hunters & Anglers to implement a second bear tag for purchase to ensure additional funding for science-based management of black bears, opportunity for fair-chase hunting, a reduction in



human-bear conflicts, balanced predator-prey ecosystem dynamics, and a healthy food source for responsible hunters and their families.

SECTIONII: Optional Information

5. **Date of Petition:** 4/14/2025.

6. **Category of Proposed Change**

☐ Sport Fishing

☐ Commercial Fishing

☒ 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>)*

☒ Amend Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

☐ Add New Title 14 Section(s): Click here to enter text.

☐ 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**

Or ☒ 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: 2025 hunting season if possible. If not, 2026..

10. **Supporting documentation:** Identify and attach to the petition any information supporting the proposal including data, reports and other documents: See recently released Black Bear Conservation Plan.

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: Increase in revenue from tags sold..

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: 04/15/2025

FGC staff action:



- ☒ Accept - complete
- ☐ Reject - incomplete
- ☐ Reject - outside scope of FGC authority

Tracking Number

Date petitioner was notified of receipt of petition and pending action: _____

Meeting date for FGC consideration: _____

FGC action:

- ☐ Denied by FGC
- ☐ Denied - same as petition _____
- ☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change

Tracking Number