

State of California
Fish and Game Commission
Initial Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action

Amend Sections 363
Title 14, California Code of Regulations
Re: Pronghorn Antelope Hunting

I. Date of Initial Statement of Reasons: January 8, 2026

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

(a) Notice Hearing:

Date: December 10, 2025

Location: Sacramento

(b) Discussion Hearing:

Date: February 12, 2026

Location: Sacramento

(c) Adoption Hearing:

Date: April 16, 2026

Location: Sacramento

III. Description of Regulatory Action

(a) Statement of Specific Purpose of Regulatory Change and Factual Basis for Determining that Regulation Change is Reasonably Necessary

Unless otherwise specified, all section references in this document are to Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR).

The California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) periodically considers recommendations from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to amend pronghorn antelope hunting regulations. Considerations include recommendations for adjusting tag quotas (total number of hunting tags to be made available), setting hunt periods, modifying zone boundaries, and authorizing methods of take, among others, to help achieve management goals and objectives for pronghorn antelope. To maintain appropriate harvest levels and hunting quality, tags must be adjusted periodically in response to dynamic environmental and biological conditions.

The proposed changes focus on pronghorn antelope tag quotas under subsection 363(m). The last time these regulations were subject to amendment was April 2025. The proposed amendments here represent the culmination of the Department's internal discussion regarding pronghorn antelope population status. The proposed changes are necessary to manage harvest for the population size.

Background

The goal of the Department's pronghorn antelope program is to maintain viable, healthy pronghorn antelope populations, and to provide a variety of recreational activities, including harvest opportunity. A limited number of pronghorn antelope hunting tags are offered annually via the Big Game Drawing, and public demand for pronghorn antelope hunting tags has annually exceeded tag availability for the last ten years. In addition to harvest opportunity, public pronghorn antelope hunting also provides data that enhances the Department's ability to monitor pronghorn antelope populations including spatial, age, genetic, and disease information.

Current Regulations

Section 363 provides descriptions of hunt zone boundaries, season opening and closing dates, methods of take (e.g., general methods, archery only), tag designations (buck, doe), tag quotas, bag and possession limits, and special conditions for pronghorn antelope.

Proposed Regulations

The proposed regulations amend subsection 363(m) to potentially adjust hunting tag numbers across all six hunt zones. Previous surveys have suggested declines in population of pronghorn antelope, and the Commission adopted reduced tag allocations for the 2025 hunt year in response. The Department is prioritizing additional surveys in February 2026 to continue to assess pronghorn antelope population status, and will make a final recommendation following the completion of surveys and data analysis. Administrative regulatory procedures require the notice of proposed changes to the regulations prior to completing the population surveys and data analysis.

Section 363 Pronghorn Antelope

Amend subsection 363(m) to modify tag quotas for archery-only season buck, general season period 1 buck and period 2 buck, and general season period 1 apprentice either-sex hunts. Tag allocations may need to be adjusted to manage harvest following the completion of population surveys. Tag quotas are shown in Table 1 below in a bracketed range. The Department will recommend final tag quotas to the Commission at the adoption hearing.

Table 1. Proposed Pronghorn Antelope Tag Allocations (Subsection 363 (m))

<i>Hunt Area</i>	<i>Archery-Only Season Buck</i>	<i>Archery-Only Season Doe</i>	<i>General Season Period 1 Buck</i>	<i>General Season Period 1 Doe</i>	<i>General Season Period 1 Apprentice Either-Sex</i>	<i>General Season Period 2 Buck</i>	<i>General Season Period 2 Doe</i>	<i>Fundraising</i>
Zone 1 -- Mount Dome	0	0	2 [0-2]	0	N/A	0	0	0
Zone 2 -- Clear Lake	4 [0-1]	0	6 [0-6]	0	N/A	0	0	0
Zone 3 -- Likely Tables	0	0	5 [0-5]	0	0	0	0	0
Zone 4 -- Lassen	5 [0-5]	0	35 [0-35]	0	5 [0-5]	35 [0-35]	0	0
Zone 5 -- Big Valley	4 [0-1]	0	5 [0-5]	0	4 [0-1]	0	0	0
Zone 6 -- Surprise Valley	4 [0-1]	0	40 [0-10]	0	4 [0-4]	0	0	0
Zones 1-6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

(b) Goals and Benefit of the Regulation

It is the policy of the state to encourage the preservation, conservation, and maintenance of wildlife resources under the jurisdiction and influence of the state. This policy shall include, but is not limited to, the following objectives:

The maintenance of sufficient populations of all species of wildlife and the habitat necessary to provide for the beneficial use and enjoyment of wildlife by all citizens of the state, to perpetuate all species of wildlife for their intrinsic and ecological values, as well as for their direct benefits to all persons, to provide for aesthetic, educational, and non-appropriative uses of the various wildlife species, to maintain diversified recreational uses of wildlife, including sport hunting, as proper uses of certain designated species of wildlife, consistent with the maintenance of healthy, viable wildlife resources, the public safety, and a quality outdoor experience, to alleviate economic losses or public health or safety problems caused by wildlife to the people of the state either individually or collectively in a

manner designed to bring the problem within tolerable limits consistent with economic and public health considerations and the objectives.

The proposed regulations will contribute to the sustainable management of pronghorn antelope populations in California. Population objectives are maintained and managed in part by periodically modifying the number of hunting tags distributed. The proposed tag quota changes will help conserve pronghorn antelope populations.

(c) Authority and Reference Sections from Fish and Game Code for Regulation

Authority: Sections 219, 265, 331 and 1050, Fish and Game Code.

Reference: Sections 331, 713 and 1050, Fish and Game Code.

(d) Specific Technology or Equipment Required by Regulatory Change: None.

(e) Identification of Reports or Documents Supporting Regulation Change

Report to follow completion of winter surveys in February 2026.

(f) Public Discussions of Proposed Regulations Prior to Notice Publication

- Wildlife Resources Committee: May 2025
- Wildlife Resources Committee: September 2025

IV. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

(a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of Commission staff that would have the same desired regulatory effect.

(b) No Change Alternative

Without the proposed changes, the outstanding issues concerning the regulations currently governing pronghorn antelope hunting would remain unaddressed. Retaining the current number of tags for the hunts listed would not be responsive to changes in population status.

V. Mitigation Measures Required by Regulatory Action

The proposed regulatory action will have no negative impact on the environment; therefore, no mitigation measures are needed. The maximum number of tags available in the proposed range is at or below the number of tags analyzed in the 2004 Final Environmental Document Regarding Pronghorn Antelope Hunting.

VI. Impact of Regulatory Action

The potential for significant statewide adverse economic impacts that might result from the proposed regulatory action has been assessed, and the following initial determinations relative to the required statutory categories have been made:

(a) Significant Statewide Adverse Economic Impact Directly Affecting Businesses, Including the Ability of California Businesses to Compete with Businesses in Other States

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states. The proposed action adjusts tag quotas for existing hunts. Given the number of tags available and the area over which they are distributed, these proposals are economically neutral to business.

(b) Impact on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State, the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses, or the Expansion of Businesses in California; Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents, Worker Safety, and the State's Environment

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the State, the creation of new businesses, the elimination of existing businesses, or the expansion of businesses in California because the expected economic impacts of the proposed regulations are unlikely to be substantial enough to significantly stimulate demand for goods or services related to pronghorn antelope hunting. The Commission anticipates benefits to the environment including, but not limited to, the maintenance of populations of pronghorn antelope to ensure their continued existence and supporting recreational opportunity, and funding wildlife conservation through the fees that hunters pay for licenses and tags. While there are no anticipated benefits to worker safety, hunting is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents, including the benefits of fresh game to eat and exercise from outdoor recreation.

(c) Cost Impacts on a Representative Private Person or Business:

The Commission is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

(d) Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State:

The Commission does not anticipate any new costs or savings to state agencies or costs/savings in federal funding to the state. However, Department revenue is expected to decline if a reduced number of pronghorn antelope tags are made available after the February 2026 survey results.

(e) Nondiscretionary Costs/Savings to Local Agencies: None

(f) Programs Mandated on Local Agencies or School Districts: None

(g) Costs Imposed on Any Local Agency or School District that is Required to be Reimbursed Under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4, Government Code: None

(h) Effect on Housing Costs: None

VII. Economic Impact Assessment

(a) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation or Elimination of Jobs Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation or elimination of jobs within the state.

(b) Effects of the Regulation on the Creation of New Businesses or the Elimination of Existing Businesses Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the creation of new businesses or the elimination of existing businesses within the state because the potential economic impacts of the proposed regulations vary annually as tag quotas change and are unlikely to be substantial enough to stimulate demand for goods or services related to pronghorn antelope hunting in the long run due to annual variability.

(c) Effects of the Regulation on the Expansion of Businesses Currently Doing Business Within the State

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on the expansion of businesses currently doing business within the state because the potential economic impacts of the proposed regulations vary annually as tag quotas change and are unlikely to be substantial enough to stimulate demand for goods or services related to pronghorn antelope hunting in the long run due to annual variability.

(d) Benefits of the Regulation to the Health and Welfare of California Residents

Hunting is an outdoor activity that can provide several health and welfare benefits to California residents. Hunters and their families benefit from fresh game to eat, and from the benefits of outdoor recreation, including exercise. People who hunt have a special connection with the outdoors and an awareness of the relationships between wildlife, habitat, and humans, and hunting can be a family tradition and a bonding activity.

(e) Benefits of the Regulation to Worker Safety

The Commission does not anticipate impacts on worker safety.

(f) Benefits of the Regulation to the State's Environment

The proposed regulations will contribute to the sustainable management of pronghorn antelope populations in California. Population objectives are maintained and managed in part by periodically modifying the number of hunting tags distributed. The proposed tag quota changes will help conserve pronghorn antelope populations.

(g) Other Benefits of the Regulation:

The Commission does not anticipate other benefits from the proposed regulation.

Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

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The Department recommends that the Commission consider proposed changes to subsection 363(m) to modify tag quotas for general season period 1 buck and period 2 buck, archery-only season buck, and general season period 1 apprentice either-sex hunts. No changes are proposed to tag quotas for archery only doe or general season doe hunts. Tag allocations may need to be adjusted to manage harvest following the completion of population surveys.

Benefits of the Regulations

The proposed regulations will contribute to the sustainable management of pronghorn antelope populations in California. Population objectives are maintained and managed in part by periodically modifying the number of hunting tags distributed. The proposed tag quota changes will help conserve pronghorn antelope populations.

Consistency and Compatibility with Existing Regulations

The proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. Section 20, Article IV, of the state Constitution specifies that the Legislature may delegate to the Commission such powers relating to the protection and propagation of fish and game as the Legislature sees fit. The Legislature has delegated to the Commission the power to adopt regulations governing pronghorn antelope hunting. No other state agency has the

authority to adopt regulations governing pronghorn antelope hunting. The Commission has reviewed its own regulations and finds that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. The Commission has searched the CCR for any regulations regarding pronghorn antelope hunting; therefore, the Commission has concluded that the proposed pronghorn antelope hunting regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations.