

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

Amend Sections 365, 366, and 708.12  
Title 14, California Code of Regulations  
Re: Bear Hunting

I. Dates of Statements of Reasons

- (a) Initial Statement of Reasons                      Date: October 20, 2025
- (b) Pre-adoption Statement of Reasons              Date: April 7, 2026
- (c) Final Statement of Reasons                      Date: April 27, 2026

II. Dates and Locations of Scheduled Hearings

- (a) Notice Hearing  
                    Date: December 10-11,2025                      Location: Sacramento
- (b) Discussion Hearing  
                    Date: February 11-12, 2026                      Location: Sacramento
- (c) Adoption Hearing  
                    Date: April 15-16, 2026                      Location: Sacramento

III. Update

An error in the “Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State” section of the Initial Statement of Reasons was corrected to reflect the calculated revenue increase as originally stated in the STD 399 and Addendum.

There have been no changes in applicable laws or to the effect of the proposed regulations from the laws and effects described in the Notice of Proposed Action.

IV. Summary of Primary Considerations Raised in Support of or Opposition to the Proposed Actions and Reasons for Rejecting Those Considerations

Public comments received at the December 10, 2025 Fish and Game Commission meeting, and comments received between January 23, 2026 and February 27, 2026, were summarized, responded to, and were included in the memo in-lieu of a Pre-Adoption Statement of Reasons. Additional comments received between February 28, 2026 and April 16, 2026, were likewise reviewed, summarized, and responded to. All submitted comments are included in Attachment A.

V. Description of Reasonable Alternatives to Regulatory Action

- (a) Alternatives to Regulation Change

No alternatives were identified by or brought to the attention of the 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 bear hunting would remain unaddressed. Retaining the current hunting regulations would not be responsive to black bear range expansion in California or availability of hunter opportunity within the current harvest threshold of 1,700 bears. The proposal is necessary to allow for hunter opportunity and expand black bear hunting in congruence with the range expansion of black bear populations.

(c) Consideration of Alternatives

In view of information currently possessed, no alternative considered would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the regulation is proposed, would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the adopted regulation, or would be more cost effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

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 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 by introducing a second bear tag. 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 or businesses within the State; no significant impacts to the creation of new business, the elimination of existing businesses, or the expansion of businesses in California are anticipated. While approximately 1-2% of bear hunters use guides, the allowance of a second bear tag is unlikely to stimulate demand in a way that would cause guides to enter the market given the years of experience and skill it takes to become one, and for similar reasons is not expected to cause existing guides to expand their

businesses by hiring additional guides. The Commission does not anticipate direct benefits to the general health and welfare of California residents, the environment, or to worker safety, however bear hunters will benefit generally through access to recreational opportunities created by the proposed changes.

(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

No new costs/savings or changes to federal funding are anticipated for state agencies. However, the Department is projected to experience higher bear tag sales with the allowance of a second bear tag that may result in revenue increases. Together, the projected revenue increase may be ~~\$158,474.80~~ \$155,104 annually (see STD399 and Addendum).

(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

## Updated Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview

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

Current regulations in Section 365 specify hunt area boundaries, bag and possession limit of one black bear (*Ursus americanus*; henceforth referred to as bear) per license year, that no feed or bait may be used to attract a bear, season start dates and end dates, as well parameters for closing the season earlier. Specifically, once the Department has determined that 1,700 bears have been taken pursuant to the reporting, the Department shall close the season. Regulations in Section 366 describe regulations for archery bear hunting. Section 708.12 describes regulations surrounding bear license tag distribution, fees, quantity allowed to purchase, instructions for filling out license tags after harvest, use of guides, validation of black bear license tags, and reporting.

Bear harvest in California has not reached the existing harvest threshold of 1,700 set in 2002 since the 2012 season when the use of dogs to hunt bears was outlawed. California contains one of the largest bear populations, and one of the lowest bear harvest rates, in the United States.

The proposal is necessary to facilitate black bear hunting in congruence with expanding black bear range in northeastern California and to allow for hunter opportunity without impacting the population. This possession limit will continue to be bound by the current harvest threshold of 1,700 bears. The additional data collected will also enhance the Department's ability to monitor, conserve, and manage bears.

The proposed changes are as follows:

Amend subsection 365(a)(1) to redefine the hunt area boundaries to include the entirety of Lassen and Modoc counties. The expanded hunt area will add the Northeastern California Bear Conservation Region as defined in the Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan for California (2025).

Amend subsection 365(c) to change the possession limit to be twice the daily bag limit, i.e., allow hunters to harvest two bears in a license year.

Add subsection 365(c)(1) to reorder and clarify the definition of a legal bear.

Add subsection 365(c)(2) to state that hunters may not be in possession of more than one bear gall bladder, as such possession is prima facie evidence that bear gallbladders are possessed for sale, as defined in Fish and Game Code Section 4758 (b). **Including this provision from Fish and Game Code meets the “nonduplication” standard of Government Code Section 11349.1 because it improves the clarity of the regulation, provides ease of reference for hunters, and prevent possible discrepancies between the regulation and Fish and Game Code.**

Amend subsection 366(c) to change the possession limit to be twice the daily bag limit, i.e., allow hunters to harvest two bears in a license year.

Add subsection 366(c)(1) to reorder and clarify the definition of a legal bear, specific to the archery season.

Add subsection 366(c)(2) to state that hunters may not be in possession of more than one bear gall bladder, as such possession is prima facie evidence that bear gallbladders are possessed for sale, as defined in Fish and Game Code Section 4758 (b), specific to the archery season. **Including this provision from Fish and Game Code meets the “nonduplication” standard of Government Code Section 11349.1 because it improves the clarity of the regulation, provides ease of reference for hunters, and prevent possible discrepancies between the regulation and Fish and Game Code.**

Amend subsection 708.12(a)(4) to allow for the purchase of up to two bear license tags during any one license year.

### Benefit of the Regulations

As set forth in FGC Section 1801, it is the policy of the state to encourage the conservation, maintenance, and utilization of fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of all the citizens of the state. The objectives of this policy include, but are not limited to, the maintenance of ecologically functional populations of bears and supporting recreational opportunity. Adoption of science-based hunting regulations supports ecologically functional bear populations to ensure those objectives are met. The fees that hunters pay for licenses and tags help fund wildlife conservation and management.

### 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 bear hunting, and reporting requirements (California Fish and Game Code Section 200). No other state agency has the authority to adopt regulations governing bear hunting and reporting requirements. 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 the adoption of bear regulations; therefore, the Commission has concluded that the proposed bear hunting and reporting regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing state regulations. Commission staff have also searched the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) and, pursuant to subdivision (b)(6) of California Government Code Section 11346.2, have determined that the proposed regulations avoid unnecessary duplication and do not conflict with federal regulations contained in the CFR.

Pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 11346.3 of the Government Code, the Commission finds that the proposed changes for bear tag reporting associated with a potential second tag serve the welfare of the people of the state.

### UPDATE

**At its April 15-16, 2026 meeting, the Commission adopted the regulations as originally proposed. An error in the “Costs or Savings to State Agencies or Costs/Savings in Federal Funding to the State” section of the Initial Statement of Reasons was corrected to reflect the calculated revenue increase as originally stated in the STD 399 and Addendum. There have been no other changes in applicable laws or to the effect of the proposed regulations from the laws and effects described in the original Notice of Proposed Action.**

### 365 Final Statement of Reasons – Black Bear Hunting (2026)

#### Attachment A – Summary and Responses to Public Comments

Responses to comments received through April 16, 2026 received at the December 10, 2025, February 12, 2026, and April 16, 2026 California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) meetings on proposed regulatory amendments to sections 365, 366, and 708.12, Title 14, CCR.

Commenter Name, Affiliation, Comment Format, Date Received	Comment Summary	California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Response
1. Wolfgang Tertel, None, Email, 01/23/2026	1a. This commenter states that the bear population requires even more active management than proposed and suggests lowering the cost of bear tags.	1a. Fish and Game Code § 4751 sets the statutory fees for bear tags. All revenue from bear tag sales is deposited into the Big Game Management Account and is used for wildlife management activities as outlined in statute. Because these fees are established in law, any change to bear tag pricing would require legislative action.
	1b. This Commenter also suggests the Commission bring back the use of hounds to hunt bears in a limited fashion.	1b. The use of dogs to hunt bears is outlawed as of 2012 under Fish and Game Code § 3960. Thus, the use of dogs for bear hunting is a legislative issue rather than a regulatory one and does not fall under the purview of the Commission or the Department.
2. M, None, Email, 01/26/2026	2. This commenter suggests allowing baiting for bears, either generally or on private property.	2. Baiting is not being considered in this regulatory package and is prohibited for all game mammals under Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 257.5.

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3. A Preston Taylor, None, Email, 01/26/2026	3. This commenter suggests breaking the state into separate bear management zones, each with a sub-limit constituting the 1700 bear statewide limit.	3. The Bear Conservation Regions (BCRs) delineated within the Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan for California (Bear Plan; 2025) describe the scale at which black bear populations are being monitored in the state. In the future, the Department may explore the possibility of dividing the statewide harvest limit between the BCRs and having separate thresholds for each BCR.
4. James Rankin, None, Email, 01/27/2026	4. This commenter suggests loosening or removing onerous requirements for bear tag validations, such as the presentation of meat, hide, and head to the Department for tooth removal.	4. These requirements are described under Fish and Game Code § 4757. Thus, bear tag validations are a legislative issue rather than a regulatory one and do not fall under the purview of the Commission. Additionally, the Department uses age at harvest data derived from premolar teeth as they are a critical component of black bear population monitoring.
5. Dan Epperson, Amador County Supervisor, Oral, 2/12/2026	5. This commenter spoke in support of the proposals and requested adding a lifetime deer/bear hunting tag.	5. This idea could be explored in the future. The Deer Conservation and Management Plan for California (Deer Plan) is in development. Deer-related changes will be considered upon completion of planning documents.

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<p>6. Jenny Berg, Humane World for Animals, Oral, 2/12/2026</p>	<p>6a. This commenter opposed the proposals, particularly increasing the bag limit to two. They referred to the fact that most Californians oppose black bear hunting and claimed that the species is vulnerable and rare; and that they reproduce slowly, are threatened by humans, habitat loss, corridors, and food due to drought and wildfire.</p>	<p>6a. Black bears are neither vulnerable nor rare in California. There is a stable population of approximately 60,000 black bears in California and there is no evidence that they are threatened by humans, habitat loss, corridors, and food due to drought and wildfire. California’s black bears are functionally a single population with high levels of genetic and landscape connectivity. The black bear population shows strong resilience to challenges such as drought and wildfire. The Department will however continue to assess the effects of such environmental variables on black bear populations.</p>
	<p>6b. The commenter also stated that this proposal will increase poaching and will not resolve human-black bear conflict.</p>	<p>6b. Within California, there is also no evidence that poaching substantially affects the population. Finally, the aim of these proposals is not to resolve human-black bear conflict (HBC); the Department’s approach to HBC mitigation is governed by the Black Bear Policy in California: Public Safety, Depredation, Conflict, and Animal Welfare (2024).</p>

**365 Final Statement of Reasons – Black Bear Hunting (2026)**

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Commenter Name, Affiliation, Comment Format, Date Received	Comment Summary	California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) Response
7. Kimberly Richard, Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission Member, Oral, 2/12/2026	7a. This commenter spoke in opposition to the second tag option. They claimed that the current population estimate of roughly 60,000 is significantly less than what there used to be in California.	7a. The current estimate of roughly 60,000 is a stable estimate and there is no evidence that abundance is less than what it was at any point in the recent past. Black bears have expanded their range substantially in the past few decades, including within the North Bay Area.
	7a. They also claimed that there are less than 78 black bears in Napa County and that hunting could drop the Napa County population size would reduce to 68, given that she knows 5 black bear hunters in Napa County.	7b. Only a portion of Napa County is open to bear hunting, and it is highly unlikely that all 78 black bears in the County (assuming if this population estimate is accurate) reside in the portion of the County where there is black bear hunting. Additionally, given that hunting success rate for the species is so low (4%), it is statistically unlikely that all 5 of these hunters would successfully harvest a black bear.
8. Bill Gaines, California Deer Association, California Houndsmen for Conservation, California Bowmen Hunter State Archery Association, Oral, 2/12/2026	8. This commenter spoke in strong support of both proposals. They said black bears are overabundant and that their range has expanded. They also said they are not sure how much the second tag will increase harvest but that it is the right thing to do; also, that the Northeastern California BCR was not previously part of the hunt zone because it is new habitat for black bears.	8. Support noted.

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9. David Bess, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Oral, 2/12/2026	9. This commenter spoke in support of both proposals and said they are rooted in sound, peer-reviewed science and mentioned that his organization looks forward to being an active and engaged partner on future regulatory packages.	9. Support noted.
10. Carol Misseldne, Advisory Board Member for Project Coyote, Oral, 2/12/2026	10. This commenter opposed the proposal to “double bear hunting tags.” They said that black bear hunting does not reduce human-black bear conflict nor improve public safety. They highlighted non-lethal approaches.	10. The proposal would not double bear hunting tags; there is no change to the total number of bear hunting tags available as part of these proposals and the proposal does not intend to reduce HBC. Additionally, the harvest threshold would remain at 1,700 under these proposals. Finally, non-lethal approaches to HBC mitigation are prioritized by the Department per the Black Bear Policy in California: Public Safety, Depredation, Conflict, and Animal Welfare (2024).
11. Camilla Fox, Executive Director of Project Coyote, Oral, 2/12/2026	11a. This commenter opposes the proposal for a second bear tag. They highlighted the Commission’s terrestrial predator policy and asked how killing twice the number of bears would comport with the policy.	11a. The harvest threshold would remain at 1,700. Thus, the idea that this proposal would allow for killing twice the number of bears is not accurate.

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	<p>11b. They also claim that the Department’s black bear integrated population model (IPM) relies on outdated studies and is untested and questionable.</p>	<p>11b. The IPM is not questionable nor untested. It was published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal in 2025. It makes use of contemporary data from various sources: age-at-harvest data, camera trap data, and local density estimates. Moreover, the Department has deployed GPS collars on over 200 black bears to collect local vital rates data from the field to ensure its data is validated and rooted in the best available science.</p>
<p>12. Jeremy Cutler., None, Oral, 2/12/2026</p>	<p>12. This commenter supports the package, mentions that they are a black bear hunter, that they enjoy black bear meat, and that the Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan for California shows that the package is backed by science.</p>	<p>12. Support noted.</p>
<p>13. J.R. Young, None, Oral, 2/12/2026</p>	<p>13. This commenter supports the package and clarifies that the package would not allow for doubling of take; rather, that it would allow for the purchase of a second tag. Moreover, they mentioned a black bear recipe they made recently and highlighted various benefits of black bear hunting.</p>	<p>13. Support noted. The clarification is correct.</p>

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14. Alex Birkhofer, None, Oral, 2/12/2026	14. This commenter supports the package and mentions that black bears are the most fully utilized hunted animal in California. They also stated that the Black Bear Conservation and Management Plan for California suggests that hunting is sustainable and would benefit other species.	14. Support noted.
15. James Fey, None, Oral, 2/12/2026	15a. This commenter supports the package and mentions that black bear hunting is primarily done by deer tag hunters and is thus not sure how much take would increase. They also mentioned the value of hunting by hunters from outside the state.	15a. Support noted. It is correct that the majority of black bears hunted in California are harvested by hunters who were hunting for deer and also had a bear tag.
	15b. Finally, they said there is no black bear hunting in Napa County.	15b. Per Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, §§ 365(a)(2) and 366(a), black bear hunting is allowed in the portion of Napa County northeast of Highway 128.

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16. Donald C. Martin, California Wild Sheep Foundation, Oral, 2/12/2026	16. This commenter supports the package and says California has more black bears than ever before. They also highlight kleptoparasitism of mountain lion kills and stress on deer populations. Finally, they state that the harvest threshold has not been reached in years.	16. Support noted.
17. Nick Cutler, None, Oral, 2/12/2026	17. This commenter echoes what the other black bear hunters said and expressed interest in the second black bear tag. They also mentioned the use for various black bear body parts such as fat for soap, and sharing joy with their community.	17. Support noted.
18. Amanda Duchardt, California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association, Oral, 2/12/2026	18. This commenter thanks the Department for stakeholder engagement and partnership and expressed full support for the package.	18. Support noted.
19. Phoenix, None, Oral, 2/12/2026	19a. This commenter opposes the package and says California should not double black bear tags;	19a. See Response 10 regarding doubling black bear tags.

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	19b. That black bears face drought, wildfires, and habitat loss.	19b. See Response 6a regarding the effects of environmental variables.
	19c. They also state that the Department needs to seek other funding solutions.	19c. Currently, black bear conservation and management at the Department is funded via Pittman-Robertson grants; 75% of the funds in those grants come from a federal tax on firearms and ammunition and the remaining 25% is a match sourced from state funds generated through hunting license and tag revenue.
	19d. Last, that every black bear is someone and that hunters should not take innocent lives.	19d. Per Fish and Game Code § 1801(e), it is the policy of the state to “To maintain diversified recreational uses of wildlife, including the sport of hunting.”

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20. Jacinthe Messier, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians, also speaking on behalf of Grindstone Indian Rancheria for Sheila, Oral, 12/10/2025	20. This commenter speaks to coexistence with bears and states they are definitely opposed to the proposed changes. The commenter states that bears are important to Tribes and states they want to open discussions going forward regarding bears.	20. The Commission and Department appreciate the relationship that California Native American Tribes have with black bears and the suggestion to continue to have open discussion regarding the species. Per the Bear Plan and the Department’s Tribal Communication and Consultation Policy, the Department will continue to notify and consult with California Native American Tribes regarding black bear conservation and management and will prioritize co-management opportunities.
21. Bill Gaines, California Houndsmen for Conservation, California Bowmen Hunters and State Archery Association, California Deer Association, Hunting and Conservation Coalition Bear Management Plan Sub-committee, Oral, 12/10/2025	21. This commenter strongly supports the second tag and expanded hunt zone.	21. Support noted.

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22. Chris Bowles, California Bowmen Hunters and State Archery Association, Oral, 12/10/2025	22. This commenter supports the proposal and appreciates the second bear tag and the work the Department has done to get here.	22. Support noted.
23. David Bess, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Oral, 12/10/2025	23. This commenter commends the Department for the package and looks forward to future engagement in the next two meetings.	23. Support noted.
24. Ned Coe, Modoc County Supervisor, and Chair of the Board, Oral, 12/10/2025	24. This commenter is pleased with the proposal, including the expansion of the hunt area. The commenter notes bear population increase and impact to beekeepers, apple orchards in the area, family ranching operations, and deer, and urges the Commission adopt as proposed.	24. Support noted. Per the Bear Plan, the black bear population is stable, though its range has expanded in areas such as Modoc County.
25. Jeremy Cutler., None, Oral, 12/10/2025	25a. This commenter thanks Arjun Dheer specifically for the Black Bear Management Plan. The commenter approves of additional opportunity and appreciates the Commission’s focus on sustainability.	25a. Support noted.

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	25b. The commenter also asks if there will be a release of the bear hunter survey data.	25b. The hunter survey results will be shared at a later date.
26. JR Young, None, Oral, 12/10/2025	26. This commenter echoes comments from Bill Gaines and fully supports the proposal.	26. Support noted.
27. Nick Cutler, None, Oral, 12/10/2025	27. This commenter expresses support for the proposal, and enthusiasm for the Black Bear Management Plan and the State of California.	27. Support noted.
28. Jenny Berg, Humane World for Animals, Email, 02/06/2026	28a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to purchase a second tag and states that the proposal is based on unsound, outdated science.	28a. See Response 11b.
	28b. The commenter also states that the proposal will not reduce HBC nor will it benefit deer.	28b. The purpose of the proposal is not to reduce HBC nor to benefit deer. Despite this, scientific studies strongly suggest that neonate predation by black bears can substantially impact deer recruitment.

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	28c. The commenter states that California’s bears belong to all residents, not just hunters, and points out that less than 1% of Californians hold hunting licenses with 0.08% of hunters hunting black bears.	28c. Per Fish and Game Code § 1801(e), it is the policy of the state to “To maintain diversified recreational uses of wildlife, including the sport of hunting.” Black bears are classified as a game animal under Fish and Game Code § 3950 and are subject to tightly regulated hunting and population monitoring. Moreover, hunting licenses and tags contribute substantially to game conservation and management, including such efforts related to black bears. For further information, see Response 19c.
	28d. The commenter also highlights concerns about enforcement and poaching.	28d. Within California, there is no evidence that poaching substantially affects the black bear population.
29. Krista Maloney, None, Email, 03/27/2026	29a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to purchase a second tag and claims it relies on outdated science and misinformation while ignoring the threats facing California’s wildlife.	29a. See responses 6a and 11b.
	29b. This commenter states that the state lacks a reliable, data-driven population estimate, making any expansion of bear killing premature and irresponsible.	29b. See responses 6a and 11b.

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	29c. The commenter states that there is no evidence that increased bear hunting reduces HBC.	29c. See responses 6b and 10.
	29d. The commenter states that expanding hunting leads to additional risks such as orphaning dependent cubs, increasing poaching incentives, and disrupting bear family structures and population stability.	29d. Per Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, §§ 365(c) and 366(c), females accompanied with cubs cannot be taken. See response 28d regarding poaching. Finally, the harvest rate in California hovers around 2% which is low and has negligible effect on the population. In no BCR is the harvest rate above a level that would significantly impact the population and there is no indication that this package would increase it to such a level anywhere.
30. Mia Laurence, None, Email, 03/31/2026	30a. This commenter opposes the package and states that California’s black bears face multiple stressors (e.g. wildlife, drought).	30a. See Response 6a.
	30b. They add that hunting destabilizes the population and family units and leads to a higher risk of orphaned cubs and the chance of bear parts being trafficked illegally.	30b. See Response 29d.

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	30c. They also state that wildlife management should prioritize ecological integrity and non-lethal coexistence.	30c. See Response 10.
31. Nishant Bhajaria, None, Email, 04/01/2026  (Comments 31 through 40 fairly and accurately represent a total of 1,278 substantially similar comments received)	31. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	31. Opposition noted. The purpose of the package is not to reduce HBC nor to increase deer population size.
32. Marea Woolrich, None, Email, 04/01/2026	32. This commenter questions why this would be allowed, describes the killing of a mother bear with two cubs as senseless, and asks the Commission to be a voice for animals that cannot fight for themselves.	32. Opposition noted. Additionally, see Response 29d regarding the killing of females with cubs. In the situation the commenter is referring to, the bear was killed not in a hunting situation but because it attacked a human.
33. Kristina Ketelsen, None, Email, 04/01/2026	33. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	33. See Response 31.

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34. Myke Savage, None, Email, 04/01/2026	34a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	34a. See Response 31.
	34b. This commenter also states that bears should never be killed for trophies.	34b. California has wanton waste rules described in FGC § 4304 and Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 14, § 352. They require meat retrieval – meat does not go to waste and describing bears as being killed for trophies is not fully accurate as they provide healthy protein.
35. Alice Ramirez, None, Email, 04/01/2026	35. This commenter opposes the expansion of bear hunting, specifically the option to purchase a second tag, and characterizes bear hunting as being for people’s egos and as trophy hunting.	35. Opposition noted. See Response 34b regarding trophy hunting.
36. Christie Reed, None, Email, 04/01/2026	36. This commenter opposes the second tag and states that an additional tag is likely to increase pressure on specific populations.	36. Opposition noted. See Response 29d. for information regarding harvest rate/pressure on black bears.

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37. Michael Henderson, None, Email, 04/01/2026	37. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	37. Opposition noted. See Response 31.
38. Jessica Howard, None, Email, 04/02/2026	38. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and desires investment into non-lethal approaches to black bear management.	38. See Response 31. Also see Response 10 regarding non-lethal approaches.
39. Candace Rocha, None, Email, 04/02/2026	39a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	39a. See Response 31.
	39b. This commenter also states that black bears are threatened by humans, habitat loss, corridors, and food due to drought, wildfire, and other stressors.	39b. See Response 6a.

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	39c. Finally, this commenter states that the proposal is not driven by sound, evidence-based wildlife management principles and is inconsistent with the values of many Californians.	39c. See Responses 11b, 19d, and 29d.
40. Allison Johnston, None, Email, 04/02/2026	40. This commenter asks the Commission not to allow hunters to hunt more bears.	40. Opposition noted.
41. Michelle Fletcher, None, Email, 04/01/2026	41a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to purchase a second bear tag, claiming it would lead to a substantial and unnecessary increase in bear mortality.	41a. Currently, harvest rate is about 2%, which is one of the lowest in the country. The Department does not anticipate a significant increase in harvest with a second tag. Moreover, the threshold would remain at 1,700.
	41b. The commenter states that this proposal will not help resolve HBC nor boost deer populations.	41b. See Response 28b.

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42. Ann Bryant, BEAR League, Email, 04/02/2026	42a. This commenter intimates that the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second tag disrespects the overwhelming number of California residents and castigates hunters. They also warn that adopting this proposal will result in anti-trophy hunting advocates to ban bear hunting in California.	42a. See Response 19d regarding the policy of maintaining the sport of hunting. Black bears are classified as a game animal under Fish and Game Code § 3950. Regarding the legality of bear hunting, this is a legislative, non-regulatory issue that is not under the purview of the Department or Commission.
43. Tony Tucci, CLAW, Email, 04/02/2026	43a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second tag and states that it is contrary to the vast majority of Californians who oppose black bear hunting for sport.	43a. See Response 19d. Moreover, the phrasing in polls that have sought public opinion on black bear hunting can play a significant role in how respondents answer – leading questions can lead to biased responses.
	43b. This commenter also states that allowing for a second tag may create increased pressure within certain populations of black bears.	43b. See Response 29d. regarding harvest pressure. Additionally, evidence suggests that black bears in California are effectively a single population.
	43c. They state that hunting does not reduce HBC nor increase deer numbers.	43c. See Response 28b.
44. Kirk Younker, None, Email, 04/01/2026	44a. This commenter supports the second tag and the addition of the Northeastern California BCR to the hunt zone.	44a. Support noted.

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	44b. This commenter also mentions that they would like to have the opportunity for a spring bear hunt like many other states do. They also note that they see more bears than deer when deer hunting.	44b. Spring season is not being considered in this package.
45. Tyler Contreras, None, Email, 04/01/2026	45a. This commenter supports the second bear tag.	45a. Support noted.
	45b. This commenter also desires a higher quota, spring season, the re-addition of hound hunting, and opening up seasons in highly populated counties with high levels of human-black bear conflicts.	45b. These items are not being considered in this package. Moreover, the use of dogs to hunt black bears was outlawed in 2012 under Senate Bill 1221. Thus, the use of dogs for black bear hunting is a legislative issue rather than a regulatory one and does not fall under the purview of the Commission or the Department.
46. Carl “Willy” Vogler, None, Email, 04/01/2026	46. This commenter approves of the proposed regulatory language with regard to bear tags and describes that it can give CDFW more tools for predator control.	46. Support noted.
47. Richard Owens, None, Email, 04/02/2026	47a. This commenter supports the second tag.	47a. Support noted.

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	47b. This commenter also mentions they are curious to see what the data shows after the first year and how the Commission will adjust/respond to that data.	47b. The Department will report harvest data as appropriate.
48. Cheryl Campbell, DHCS, Email, 04/02/2026	48. This commenter expresses their concern about bear euthanasia and recommends that the Department should prioritize education and coexistence.	48. This package is not related to euthanasia nor HBC. The aim of the package is not to resolve HBC; the Department’s approach to HBC mitigation is governed by the Black Bear Policy in California: Public Safety, Depredation, Conflict, and Animal Welfare (2024). Moreover, the Department does prioritize educational approaches as a member agency of BearWise.
49. Anthony DeSena, Humane World for Animals, Email, 04/05/2026	49a. This commenter opposes the package and claims it is based on outdated science.	49a. See Response 11b.
	49b. The commenter also states that there is no basis for the claim that killing bears will improve deer populations.	49b. See Responses 28b and 31.

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	49c. The commenter states that hunting can destabilize bear family groups and increase cub mortality.	49c. See Response 29d.
	49d. The commenter adds a personal perspective that if killing is not necessary, it should not be broadened.	49d. See Responses 19d and 42a.
50. Rubi Khilnani, None, Email, 04/02/2026	50. This commenter characterizes trophy hunters as having blood lust and states they oppose trophy hunting of bears and wolves.	50. See Response 34b. Moreover, this package is unrelated to wolves.
51. Nicola McGillicuddy, None, Email, 04/02/2026	51. This commenter opposes the package and states that it risks concentrating hunting pressure in certain areas and placing additional strain on local populations. They also state it is concerning given that bears face a shrinking and fragmented habitat.	51. See Responses 24 and 29d.
52. Ryan Orr, None, Email, 04/06/2026	52. This commenter supports the second bear tag and requests a spring season as well as mountain lion hunting.	52. Support noted. Spring season and mountain lion hunting are not part of this package.

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53. Maureen O’Sullivan, None, Email, 04/07/2026	53a. This commenter opposes the package and states it will not reduce HBC.	53a. See Response 6b.
	53b. The commenter also states that it is unclear how increased harvest would impact the population, cub survival, and ecosystem.	53b. See Response 29d.
	53c. Finally, the commenter states that California should prioritize non-lethal strategies.	53c. See Response 48.
54. Linda Perkins, None, Email, 04/04/2026	54. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says that expanding bear hunting would not reduce HBC or increase the deer population.	54. See Response 31.
55. Brad Thomsen, Big Bear Investigations, Email, 04/10/2026	55. This commenter strongly supports the package and describe it as a thoughtful, science-based step toward responsible wildlife management.	55. Support noted.

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56. Brandon Tirado, None, Email, 04/03/2026	56. This commenter supports the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and says it will provide additional food for their family. They also add that the term trophy hunting is used to demonize people.	56. Support noted.
57. David Bess, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Oral, 04/16/2026	57. This commenter strongly supports the package and urges the Commission to adopt it. They characterize the package as the culmination of years of work and research, that it provides reasonable options to manage the black bear population, and that it is rooted in the best available science.	57. Support noted.
58. Micah Dungey, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	58. This commenter supports the package and states that it is rooted in scientific data and great work.	58. Support noted.
59. Josh Brones, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	59. This commenter states that as the black bear population has increased, harvest has decreased. They also state that the package will have a negligible effect on the population.	59. See Response 24 regarding black bear population trend.

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60. Bill Gaines, California Deer Association, California Houndsmen for Conservation, various other NGOs, Oral, 04/16/2026	60. This commenter supports the package and states that it is rooted in solid science.	60. Support noted.
61. Anjali Ranadive, Women for Wolves, Oral, 04/16/2026	61a. This commenter opposes the package and contends that the Department kills black bears for existing in a shrinking world.	61a. Opposition noted. See Response 7a regarding the expansion of black bear range.
	61b. They also recommend non-lethal tools and to bring together communities and collaboration.	61b. See Response 48.
	61c. They ask if more killing is really the answer.	61c. The goal of this package is not more killing, but to increase hunting opportunity within the existing harvest threshold of 1,700. The harvest threshold is not changing and it was routinely reached prior to 2013 with no detrimental impacts to the population, which has expanded over the previous few decades.

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62. Reena Hachme, Women for Wolves, Oral, 04/16/2026	62. This commenter seconds what the previous commenter stated and encourages more investment in coexistence, education, and conflict reduction.	62. See Response 48.
63. Tracy Izor, Women for Wolves, Oral, 04/16/2026	63a. This commenter agrees with the last two commenter and mentions that a second tag can impact region-specific populations, as this package does not include region-specific limits.	63a. See Response 29d regarding hunting pressure. While this package does not contain BCR-level thresholds, they are something the Department could explore in the future.
	63b. The commenter also states that black bears are already facing struggles with drought, fire, and human encroachment.	63b. See Response 6a.
64. Tara Dehdari, Women for Wolves, Oral, 04/16/2026	64. This commenter states that the package would move California backwards and it would lead to orphaned cubs, disrupt family structures, and destabilize ecological balance.	64. See Response 29d.

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65. Dan Epperson, Amador County Supervisor, Oral, 04/16/2026	65. This commenter describes black bear as quality table fare and highlights community aspect of its meat. They also argue against the term “trophy hunter” and state that the reason for hunting is not to kill, but it is about the passion and pursuit of the sport. The commenter states they support the package.	65. Support noted.
66. JR Young, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	66. This commenter supports the package and highlights that the package would increase Department funding for black bear monitoring and management.	66. Support noted.
67. Seth Watts, Black Bear Pursuit, Oral, 04/16/2026	67. This commenter supports the package and clarifies what trophy hunting means to the hunting community, including food provisioning and spending time with family and friends.	67. Support noted.
68. Chris Hall, California Deer Association, Oral, 04/16/2026	68. This commenter supports the package and states that the black bear population is increasing.	68. See Response 24.

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69. Mark Henley, California Waterfowl Association, Oral, 04/16/2026	69. This commenter supports the package and that it adds flexibility for hunters without having negative consequences for the black bear population.	69. Support noted.
70. Jenny Berg, Humane World for Animals, Oral, 04/16/2026	70. This commenter opposes the proposal for hunters to be able to obtain a second tag and emphasizes the importance of social science. They mention that Californians overwhelmingly oppose bear hunting and that a second tag would cater to the 0.08% of Californians who hunt bears. They ask the Commission to reject the proposal to keep the hunting season as-is, as a compromise.	70. Opposition noted. The numbers cited are based on polling that made use of potentially leading questions, characterizing bear hunting as trophy hunting and misrepresenting the reasons why people hunt bears. This may have skewed public perception. For additional information regarding hunting and black bears as game animals, see Response 28c.
71. Larry L., None, Oral, 04/16/2026	71. This commenter supports the package and asks the Commission to consider bringing back hound hunting.	71. Support noted. See Response 1b regarding the use of dogs to hunt bears.
72. Lionel Mares, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	72a. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second tag. They state that increased hunting will not reduce HBC.	72a. See Response 6b.

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73. Camilla Fox, Project Coyote, Oral, 04/16/2026	73a. This commenter opposes the package and claims the state does not have a scientifically sound justification for this action, lacks reliable population estimates, and that black bears are facing habitat destruction and fragmentation as well as climate change and associated natural food loss.	73a. See Response 11b.
	73b. The commenter also states that the proposal would disrupt family groups and local populations.	73b. See Response 29d.

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	<p>73c. The commenter also states that public opinion is against more black bear hunting in California and the proposal contravenes the Terrestrial Predator Policy.</p>	<p>73c. The Terrestrial Predator Policy also states, “The department shall provide consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities. Management strategies shall recognize the ecological interactions between predators and other wildlife species and consider all available management tools, best available science, affected habitat, species, and ecosystems and other factors. The department shall provide consumptive and non-consumptive recreational opportunities. The recreational take of native terrestrial predator species shall be managed in a way that ensures sustainable populations of predator and prey are maintained.”</p> <p>The package provides for sustainable, consumptive, recreational take of black bears and thus does not contravene the Terrestrial Predator Policy.</p>
<p>74. Julie Adelson, None, Oral, 04/16/2026</p>	<p>74. This commenter opposes the proposal to allow hunters to obtain a second bear tag and is against all hunting. They describe the proposal as making them sick.</p>	<p>74. Opposition noted.</p>

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75. Anthony DeSena, Humane World for Animals, Oral, 04/16/2026	75a. This commenter opposes the proposal and claims it is based upon outdated science.	75a. See Response 11b.
	75b. The commenter also states that there is no evidence that hunting bears will improve deer populations or reduce HBC, and that proven non-lethal solutions are more effective.	75b. See Responses 6b and 31.
76. Dan Ryan, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	76. This commenter supports the proposal and echoes previous comments of support.	76. Support noted.
77. Bella Niven, Social Compassion in Legislation, Oral, 04/16/26	77a. This commenter opposes the proposal stating it is unnecessary for conservation of the state’s wildlife.	77a. See Response 19d.
	77b. This commenter also states that the financial gain to the state for more bear tags is marginal.	77b. It is not clear yet how many additional tags will be sold with this proposal. Currently, about 30,000 are sold per year. The Department will assess total revenue gained from additional tag sales at a later time.

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	77c. This commenter states that bears play a critical role in local ecosystems and they suffer immensely from vehicle accidents, drought, wildfire, and hunting.	77c. It is correct that black bears play a critical role in local ecosystems. See Response 6a regarding the effects of the other variables mentioned.
78. Matthew Duncan, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	78. This commenter states that the Commission is not concerned with public opinion on bear hunting.	78. See Response 19d.
79. Richard Owens, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	79a. This commenter echoes supportive comments for the proposal.	79a. Support noted.
	79b. This commenter states that sows with cubs cannot be taken by hunters during the hunt season, and that hunters will look for signs of lactation so they will not harvest lactating sows.	79b. It is correct that that females accompanied by cubs may not be taken pursuant to Title 14, Section 365(c).
80. T Torgerson, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	80. This commenter supports the proposal.	80. Support noted.
81. Nick Stone, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	81. This commenter supports the proposal and echoes previous comments of support.	81. Support noted.

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82. Pamela W., None, Oral, 04/16/2026	82a. This commenter opposes the proposal.	82a. Opposition noted.
	82b. The commenter also notes the proposal only serves a small minority of the population, and questions of the policy and regulations should reflect the interests of all Californians.	82b. See Responses 19d and 43a.
83. Charlie Whitwam, HOWL for Wildlife, Oral, 04/16/2026	83a. This commenter and organization supports the proposal.	83a. Support noted.
	83b. The commenter also states that the proposal is too low of a harvest to manage the black bear population.	83b. It is anticipated that the current harvest threshold of 1,700 is not at a level that would detectably affect the total population of roughly 60,000.
84. Mauna VanBoza, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	84. This commenter opposes the proposal.	84. Support noted.

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85. Kaitlyn Ricardi, Calaveras County Resident, Oral, 04/16/2026	85. This commenter supports the proposal.	85. Support noted.
86. Chrissy Pfanner, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	86. This commenter supports the proposal, echoes previous comments of support, and looks forward to spending time hunting with her son.	86. Support noted.
87. Jeremy Cutler, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	87. This commenter supports the proposal.	87. Support noted.
88. Nick Cutler, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	88a. This commenter supports the proposal, appreciates the clarifying statements made by the Commission staff at the outset of the item discussion, and makes a facetious remark regarding tag validation in northeastern California.	88a. Support noted.
89. Spencer, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	89. This commenter supports the proposal and relies on bear meat as a primary food source.	89. Support noted.

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90. Chad Thomas, Member of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Oral, 04/16/2026	90. This commenter supports the proposal and states that the black bear population is healthy, robust, and expanding.	90. Support noted.
91. Tony Tucci, None, Oral, 04/16/2026	91. This commenter opposes the second bear tag.	91. Opposition noted.
92. Mike Costello, HOWL for Wildlife, Oral, 04/16/2026	92. This commenter supports and appreciates the work put forth on the proposal.	92. Support noted.
93. Ned Coe, Modoc County Supervisor, Oral, 04/16/2026	93. This commenter states that the Modoc County Board of Supervisors strongly supports the hunt area expansion into eastern Modoc and eastern Lassen counties.	93. Support noted. The expansion mostly encompasses eastern Modoc and northern, rather than eastern, Lassen counties.