

Final Statement of Reasons – Attachment 1 – Summary and Responses to Public Comments Received on Proposed Changes to Elk Hunting Regulations for the 2026-27 Season.

#	Commenter Name, Affiliation, Comment Format, Date Received	Comment Summary	California Fish and Game Commission Response
1	Bill Gaines, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association,; oral comments, Feb 12, 2026	Commenter supports the proposed addition of elk tags and elk hunting opportunity, supports the proposed shotgun slug method of take, supports the clarification of one elk tag per person and is appreciative that Department is working to keep elk hunting affordable in California.	Support noted. The Commission adopted the regulations as proposed, including the new Balance of State zone, an increase of 58 bull elk tags and 100 antlerless elk tags for SHARE hunts, and an increase of 26 tags across general methods, archery and muzzleloader hunts in the Owens Valley Tule Elk Management Unit, allowing shotguns firing slugs as a method of take for SHARE elk tags and clarifying that an individual shall only be eligible for one elk tag per license year.
2	Jeremy Cutler; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Commenter reiterates Bill Gaines' comments and appreciation for Department. Appreciates the opportunity to harvest and share the meat with their community.	Support noted. See Response to Comment 1.
3	Amanda Duchardt, California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Commenter expresses appreciation for the Department, especially in terms of increased archery tags in recent years.	Support noted. See Response to Comment 1.

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4a	Alex Birkhofer; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Commenter reiterated Amanda Duchardt's comments and would like to see more archery opportunities.	<p>Support of increased archery elk hunting opportunities noted. See Response to Comment 1.</p> <p>The Commission and Department recognize the interest in expanding archery hunting opportunities and the Department continually evaluates opportunities to provide additional elk hunting access, including archery-specific opportunities, where biologically and logistically appropriate.</p>

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4b	Alex Birkhofer; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Commenter would like archery tags for the Gabilan hunt zone.	<p>While archery elk tags are not currently available in the Gabilan zone, the Commission has increased elk tag opportunities in this hunt area in recent years in response to changes in herd status and available opportunity. However, current survey data and population monitoring do not support an additional increase in tag numbers or the creation of new archery opportunity within the Gabilan zone.</p> <p>The Commission and Department remain responsive to changes in elk abundance and distribution and will continue to evaluate opportunities for additional tags of any hunt type when elk population status, access, distribution of animals, landowner participation, and other landscape considerations can support sustainable increases in harvest opportunity</p>

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5	Nick Cutler; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Agreement with Jeremy Cutler; appreciates SHARE hunting opportunities and the opportunity to get to know the local community through hunting, supports the clarification of one elk tag per person.	Support noted. See Response to Comment 1.
6	Donald C. Martin; guide outfitter; oral comments Feb 12, 2026	Commenter appreciates increased SHARE tags, expansion of the SHARE program to other areas of the state and the increased opportunity that SHARE tags bring to working class hunters.	Support noted. See Response to Comment 1.
7	Bill Gaines, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and California Bowmen Hunters/State Archery Association; oral comments April 16, 2026	Commenter appreciates additional tags and acknowledges the good work of the Department.	Support noted. See Response to Comment 1.