State of California - Fish and Game Commission
PETITION TO THE CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSION FOR REGULATION CHANGE
FGC 1 (Rev 06/19)

Tracking Number: (_2026-22___)

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) 715 P Street, 16th Floor, 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 Hicks
Address: [redacted]
Telephone number: [redacted]
Email address: [redacted]

2. Rulemaking Authority (Required) - Fish and Game Code sections 2118 and 2120 and Title 14, sections 671 and 671.1 concern restricted animals and permits. Fish and Game Code section 108 and Title 14, section 662 govern regulation-change petitions. Section 2118(b) expressly includes hedgehogs. I request only action within the Commission's authority. Please identify whether a narrow pet-keeping permit or exception is legally available; if legislation is necessary, identify the specific statutory barrier and amendment needed.

3. Overview (Required) - I ask the Commission to grant this petition for further consideration and direct CDFW to explain, with species-specific evidence, why captive-bred African pygmy hedgehogs remain prohibited as ordinary household pets. This petition concerns Atelerix albiventris, also called the four-toed hedgehog; it does not seek an exemption for all hedgehogs. I propose a narrowly defined authorization for lawfully acquired, documented captive-bred animals kept in secure indoor enclosures, with no release and appropriate animal-health and owner-education requirements. Please consider amendments to Title 14, sections 671(c)(2)(D) and 671.1 to implement that authorization to the extent permitted by statute. If the Commission concludes that section 2118 prevents this relief, please explain that conclusion and identify the legislative action required.

4. Rationale (Required) - I am asking the state to justify the continuing restriction of this particular species. A general statement that a nonnative animal could cause harm does not explain how likely or serious the harm is, or why a prohibition on ordinary pet ownership is necessary. Please provide the original legislative and regulatory records supporting the hedgehog restriction, identify its proponents and stated reasons, and identify any subsequent review of captive-bred Atelerix albiventris. If the relevant records or studies are unavailable, please say so.

Survival and establishment. University of Florida veterinary guidance recommends a warm environment of 70–80°F for pet hedgehogs. That raises a question about winter survival in places such as Denair, but a recommended captive temperature is not a measured outdoor survival limit. Please identify California locations where this species could survive year round, obtain food and water, reproduce, and establish a self-sustaining population. Address shelter and warmer or irrigated habitats, and provide relevant records of establishment elsewhere.

Environmental harm. These hedgehogs eat a variety of invertebrates and other foods. I do not assume that insect eating is harmless. Please identify the native species or agricultural resources likely to be harmed, the expected scale of predation or competition, and the evidence connecting escaped pets to a meaningful ecological impact. If evidence involving European hedgehogs or another species is used, explain why it applies to Atelerix albiventris.

Disease. The ability to carry a pathogen does not establish that every individual carries it. Conversely, a healthy appearance does not establish freedom from infection: CDC has documented Salmonella outbreaks linked to pet hedgehogs. Please identify the pathogens relied upon, evidence of their prevalence in captive-bred animals, likely transmission routes, and expected harm to people, wildlife or agriculture. Distinguish susceptibility, actual carriage, documented transmission and population-level effects. Explain why secure housing, breeder records, hygiene education, veterinary oversight and any validated testing would be inadequate.

Consistent treatment of risk. Domestic dogs are expressly excepted in section 2118, and federal dog-import rules address rabies through requirements that vary with travel and vaccination history, including restrictions on ineligible dogs. The possibility that a dog may carry rabies has not resulted in a universal ban on dog imports. I am not claiming that dog and hedgehog diseases have identical controls. I ask why suitable safeguards can manage risk in one setting but would be insufficient for captive-bred African pygmy hedgehogs. Please also explain the evidence-based distinction between these animals and the domesticated rats and mice excepted by section 2118.

Please distinguish observed harm from predicted risk and state the assumptions and uncertainty underlying each prediction. Prevention need not wait for damage to occur, but a restriction should have a reasoned basis proportionate to the likelihood and severity of harm. I ask for the evidence supporting the current policy and an explanation of why narrower safeguards would not suffice. If that evidence does not justify the existing treatment, please pursue the proposed change within your authority and identify any necessary legislative amendment.

SECTION II: Optional Information

5. Date of Petition: September 27, 2026

6. **Category of Proposed Change**

☐ Sport Fishing
☐ Commercial Fishing
☐ Hunting
☒ Other, please specify: Restricted species / captive-bred African pygmy hedgehogs

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): 671(c)(2)(D) and 671.1, to the extent authorized by statute.
☐ Add New Title 14 Section(s): Not applicable.
☐ Repeal Title 14 Section(s): Not applicable.

8. If the proposal is related to a previously submitted petition that was rejected, specify the tracking number: Not applicable.
Or ☒ Not applicable.

9. Effective date: Upon completion of ordinary rulemaking; no emergency action requested.

10. Supporting documentation: Sources for the requested review, accessed September 27, 2026.
1. Fish and Game Code §2118, hedgehog restriction and domestic-animal exceptions:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=FGC&sectionNum=2118.
2. Title 14 CCR §671, restricted species, and §671.1, permits:
https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/california/14-CCR-671
https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/california/14-CCR-671.1
3. University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, How to care for your pet hedgehog, housing and environment:
https://smallanimal.vethospital.ufl.edu/clinical-services/zoological-medicine/how-to-care-for-your-pet-hedgehog/
4. Dierenfeld (2009), Feeding behavior and nutrition of the African pygmy hedgehog:
https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19341959/
5. CDC, 2019 Salmonella Infections Linked to Pet Hedgehogs, October 2, 2019:
https://archive.cdc.gov/www_cdc_gov/salmonella/typhimurium-01-19/index.html
6. CDC, Bringing a Dog into the U.S., requirements according to risk and vaccination history:
https://www.cdc.gov/importation/dogs/index.html
These sources support the questions raised; they do not establish that hedgehog ownership is risk-free. Please provide the state's species-specific assessments and original restriction records.

11. Economic or Fiscal Impacts: No reliable estimate is available to me. Reviewing the evidence and developing or administering safeguards could require agency resources. A narrow authorization could create lawful opportunities for breeders and pet retailers and change enforcement costs. Please assess these effects during consideration of the proposal.

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

None specified at this stage. A permit, captive-breeding record or owner-education acknowledgment could be considered if supported by the review.

SECTION 3: FGC Staff Only

Date received: **9/27/2026**

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 _____

Tracking Number

- ☐ Granted for consideration of regulation change