

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

September 25, 2013

The Honorable Jerry Brown, Governor
State of California
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 711 (Rendon) Hunting: Non-lead Ammunition

Dear Governor Brown:

As members of the Legislature representing the rural districts of California, we feel that it is necessary to communicate to you our very serious concerns about AB 711 (Rendon).

This bill would have a very detrimental impact on the constituents of our legislative districts and on those who travel there for recreational purposes.

AB 711 is a significant part of an increasingly disturbing trend of legislation being enacted that serves against the best interests of our districts. Many of our constituents make their living working the land as farmers, ranchers or from vocations related to outdoor recreational pursuits such as hunting and fishing. They are small business people who own and operate sporting goods stores, restaurants, gas stations, motels, guide services, and many other hunting associated activities that generate income for their families. They depend on access to, and the wise and responsible use of, the state's many natural resources.

We often hear from our constituents that they believe that state government is not representing their interests evenhandedly compared to the desires of urban populations who are not fully informed on the issues, and favoring those who oppose the use and consumption of California's natural resources for recreational purposes. The latter often will use highly visible subject matter to garner support for the passage of legislation that achieves a hidden agenda.

We believe this is the case with AB 711. Though the sponsors allege it is to keep lead from hunters' ammunition away from condors and other wildlife scavengers, it is their desire to stop hunting altogether, which AB 711 is likely to achieve. The executive director of the bill's sponsor has publicly stated that the organization's ultimate goal is to ban all hunting!

While the sponsors cry for the critical need to protect condors and other species, they have amended the bill so that its total ban on lead doesn't become effective until 2019. If they really believe that hunters' traditional ammunition is a serious threat to wildlife, why would they not fight to have the bill become effective immediately? Furthermore, why has the bill been amended to let a future and unknown DFW Director and Governor unilaterally make determinations on which ammunition can be used? This is an abdication of legislative responsibility and oversight, and seems contrary to what the sponsors are actually saying about lead ammunition.

The bill could, in effect, result in a ban on hunting because the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) has made a determination that non-lead ammunition for hunting firearms meets the tests for armor piercing handgun ammunition because of its chemical composition and the fact that various makes and models of handguns exist that can collectively shoot virtually all of it. It is illegal under both state and federal laws to use or possess such armor piercing ammunition. To date, ATF has not granted any waivers for sporting ammunition, and ammunition manufacturers are uncertain if they can continue to produce it.

As a result, non-lead ammunition has already become a scarce commodity on retailers' shelves, and the supply is usually not available in many of the popular hunting cartridges. Furthermore, in spite of what the AB 711 sponsors may say, the cost of non-lead ammunition is much more than the same ammunition loaded with traditional lead projectiles. For example, a recent trip to a sporting goods store revealed that a 20 round box of the very popular Remington 7mm magnum hunting ammunition cost about \$28. The same load employing non-lead ammunition costs about \$44. That's a 64% price increase! Most rural residents simply don't have that kind of discretionary money available in their family budgets.

The State Department of Finance estimates that, in view of the lack of availability of non-lead ammunition, AB 711 could result in a net loss of \$9 million to the Department of Fish and Wildlife. Furthermore, the Department of Finance analysis noted that California would also be put at risk of losing up to \$14 million in conservation program funding from reduced federal Pittman-Robertson ammunition excise tax money and an anticipated reduction in hunting license sales.

Last year, SB 1221 (Lieu) was enacted which banned the use of dogs to hunt bear and bobcats. Since then, the sales of hunting licenses to bear and bobcat hunters has declined, costing the Department of Fish and Wildlife a commensurate loss in funding which could, in turn, affect its ability to successfully manage an expanding bear population. This legislation was a major blow to rural California and its economy.

AB 711 is a direct assault on all residents and hunters for whom outdoor pursuits are a longstanding tradition and heritage. Were this bill to be enacted, it could effectively destroy a vital component of rural life in California, and that deeply concerns us and our constituents.

California is a very diverse state with very diverse groups of people. We feel that the culture of the outdoors and rural life in the districts we represent is threatened by many of the bills that now sit on your desk, particularly AB 711. More importantly though, hunting and shooting are not just rural issues.

A large number of hunters and shooters, who reside in urban and suburban areas, enjoy all that our rural areas provide in terms of recreation and sport.

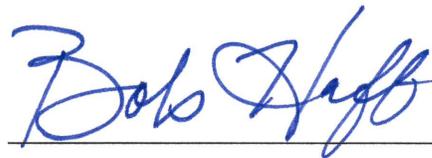
On behalf of the millions of Californians who live and work in our legislative districts, and those visitors who contribute to our local economies by coming there for hunting, we the undersigned members of the legislature ask that you consider our concerns and the need for fairness and balance in our state laws.

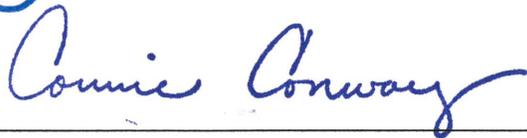
If AB 711 is not important enough to its sponsors to ban lead ammunition immediately, instead of waiting years until 2019, then it clearly is not imperative that it be signed now.

Accordingly, we, the undersigned members of the legislature, respectfully urge your veto of AB 711. We welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss this and other issues impacting rural California.

Respectfully;







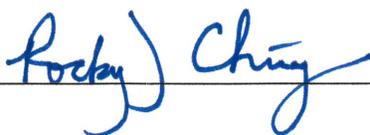














John DeJ

John

Bob

Memor

Sharon Grove

John

Dan Fogue

Jean Fuller

Scott W

Marie Waldron

Frank Bigelow