



January 29, 2021

The Honorable Scott Wiener
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 252 – OPPOSE
As Introduced January 25, 2021**

Dear Senator Wiener:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I regret to inform you of our opposition to your Senate Bill 252, which would ban the hunting of black bears for sport in California. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

RCRC believes there is no scientific basis or practical necessity for the introduction of this bill, particularly since black bear hunting is already tightly regulated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Currently, CDFW data demonstrates that the black bear in California is flourishing, while rural communities struggle to control black bear populations to ensure the safety of their residents. Further, RCRC is not aware of any studies that show that recent wildfires have had a meaningful impact to the size of black bear populations. However, if impacts to black bears, among other wildlife, from wildfires are a concern, RCRC would point to legislation and budget allocations aimed at reducing California wildfires, rather than the narrowly focused ban in SB 252.

While we appreciate the bill's accommodation for take of black bear under certain circumstances, such as the ability for ranchers to protect their livestock from an immediate black bear threat, under SB 252, our communities will be deprived of their only recourse for continual public safety through seasonal population control. Instead, our communities will have to navigate an often inefficient bureaucracy for obtaining depredation permits, and relying on insufficient actions by state and federal agencies to do the work that hunters have done capably in rural areas for centuries. Black bear hunting also has deep-rooted cultural significance throughout its natural habitat where the taking of bears has occurred for thousands of years.

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For the above reasons, RCRC opposes SB 252. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at snag@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in brown ink that reads "Siddhartha NAG". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

SIDD NAG
Legislative Advocate