March 15, 2022

Kitty Block, President and Chief Executive Officer

The Humane Society of the United States

1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450

Washington, DC 20037

**Subject: United States Petition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Black Bears - OPPOSITION**

Dear Ms. Block:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is writing this letter to express our strong opposition of the Humane Society of the United States petition to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife asking that the California Fish and Game Commission ban all hunting of black bears throughout California.

As you may be aware, black bear populations in California are conservatively estimated at 30,000 to 40,000, more than triple the population over 40 years ago. In addition, the state’s hunting quota of 1,700 bears has not been reached in years, and in 2020 only 919 tags were filled.

The most commonly reported cause of black-tailed and mule deer fawn mortality in northern California is predation from a diverse guild of mammalian predators including black bears (Ursus americanus), coyotes (Canis latrans), and mountain lions (Puma concolor); and black bears have long been known to be an important predator of fawns (Heiko U. Wittmer, 2021). Consequently, the combined effect of high predation of fawns from black bears, has heavily contributed to a rapid, short-term decline of black-tailed deer throughout Siskiyou County (Heiko U. Wittmer, 2021). Siskiyou County expects that as black bear populations continue to rise, predation on juvenile deer will increase, and in turn, deer populations will continue to decrease. In turn, black bears could reach a level that results in over completion of feed sources, without the adequate ungulate populations to support them. It is therefore critical that black bear populations are managed, and responsible hunting is the most effective tool for such management.

We encourage the Humane Society to rescind their petition the to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Please contact Elizabeth Nielsen, Deputy County Administrator at enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us or (530) 842-8012, if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on March 15, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Brandon A. Criss, Chair

Board of Supervisors

cc: Congressman Doug LaMalfa

 Senator Brian Dahle

 Assemblywoman Megan Dahle

 Chuck Bonham, CDFW

 Siskiyou County Gun Owners

 Siskiyou County Fish & Game Commission

 Rural County Representatives of California

# References

Heiko U. Wittmer, B. C. (2021). *Final Report Siskiyou Deer-Mountain Lion Study (2015-2020).* Santa Cruz, California : Environmental Studies Department, Univeristy of California, Santa Cruz.