February 6, 2024

Director, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

P.O. Box 944209

Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

**Subject: Amendment of California Code of Regulations RE: Mammal Hunting**

Dear Mr. Bonham:

On November 28, 2023, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife submitted a proposal to Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director, Fish and Game Commission asking to “Amend sections 362, 363, 364, 364.1, 554, 555, and 708.14, and add 555.1 Title 14, California Code of Regulations RE: Mammal Hunting”.

A number of subsections within those proposed amendments would apply to Siskiyou County with the most concerning being the addition of subsection 555.1 to describe and classify four “conflict zones”. This subsection reads “Within Conflict Areas” the Department has identified opportunities to modify the rules and regulations within the current 555 program under 555.1 to help reduce elk conflict and provide increased hunting opportunities for qualifying landowners. “Chronic, elevated human-elk conflict, elk occupation of predominantly private property, and limited public hunting access has been documented by the Department in the Siskiyou, Northwestern, Mendocino, and Tehachapi Elk Hunt Zones.”

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors do not support this proposed classification of the Siskiyou elk hunt zone as a “conflict zone” under 555.1. We recommend that the Siskiyou elk hunt zone continue to be managed under the current 555 program rules and regulations.

By classifying the Siskiyou elk hunt zone as a “conflict zone”, the Department would be directing that all newly available elk tags would be applied to the Cooperative Elk Hunting Area and SHARE Programs. The general public land hunter under section 364 would not benefit from the proposed regulation change.

While we recognize the significant role and importance that private landowners play in providing habitat for elk herds in the Siskiyou elk hunt unit, we are also aware that the public demand for elk tags far exceeds the availability of opportunity within the Siskiyou Unit, with some hunters waiting more than 20 years for a “once in a lifetime” elk draw. As such when additional elk tags become available, the increased opportunity should be shared by both landowners and those that hunt public lands.

If the Siskiyou elk hunt unit is not designated as a “conflict zone” it will allow for continued management under the current rules and regulations of section 555, Cooperative Elk Hunting Area where the general public land hunter and landowner can both benefit from an increase in the availability of elk tags in the Siskiyou hunt unit. We do not support the designation of the Siskiyou elk hunt unit as a “conflict zone”.

Approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on February 6, 2024, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Michael N. Kobseff, Chair

Board of Supervisors