

Archery Trade Association * Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies * Bear Trust International * Boone and Crockett Club * Bowhunting Preservation Alliance * Campfire Club of America * Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation * Catch-A-Dream Foundation * Conservation Force * Dallas Safari Club * National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses * National Rifle Association * National Shooting Sports Foundation * National Trappers Association * National Wild Turkey Federation * North American Bear Foundation * Pheasants Forever * Quality Deer Management Association * Ruffed Grouse Society * Safari Club International * Texas Wildlife Association * Wildlife Management Institute

March 6, 2008

Honorable Nick Rahall, Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Don Young, Ranking Member
House Natural Resource Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall and Congressman Young:

The organizations on the letterhead, representing millions of hunters, anglers and other conservationists, strongly urge that you oppose and give no further legislative attention to HR5534, the so-called "Bear Protection Act of 2008".

We believe that the bill is:

- an unnecessary intrusion into state wildlife management authorities;
- that any interstate movement of viscera from or into a state where possession, use or sale is not legal is already subject to prosecution under the Lacey Act;
- that CITES adequately governs import/export in international circumstances;
- that US (and North American) bear populations are healthy, robust and expanding (in most places) and that while poaching occurs, state and federal law enforcement is adequately addressing it;
- and that this bill would have arguably minimal affect on Asian bear populations which are most subject to poaching for viscera but also under intense pressure from habitat loss.

The latest TRAFFIC report (April 2002) www.traffic.org on the status of *Ursus americanus* (data from state, provincial, federal wildlife agencies) substantiates that North American black bear populations are robust, and that demand for bear gall in or from the United States is not driving illegal poaching of US bears. Subject report

concludes (page 90) "...further laws banning all trade in bear gallbladders or other parts at the national level are currently unnecessary".

Federal (USFWS) law enforcement needs to focus on international trafficking as a priority; interstate commerce activity is a much lower priority, especially with limited federal wildlife law enforcement dollars. The real solution to the issue of Asian bear gall trafficking is, in part, to boost USFWS-LE budget to address foreign commerce.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this issue. Thank you for your sincere consideration of our perspectives and interests.

Sincerely,

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