



United States Senate

July 23, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

I write in opposition of the proposal (Federal Register 85 FR 20030) to expand hunting and sport fishing in National Wildlife Refuges and in the National Fish Hatchery System. This proposal is the single largest expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities by a federal agency and poses a direct threat to the wildlife and ecosystems that the refuge system was created to protect.

In California alone, this proposal would expand hunting and fishing opportunities in four refuges that are home to 23 endangered species. Additional human traffic and hunting activity can adversely stress non-target species, including those that are threatened or endangered. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's own compatibility determination states that hunting can alter the distribution, behavior, and population structure of wildlife species. As climate change and increased development threaten wildlife and habitat, increasing fishing and hunting opportunities across over 2 million acres of federal lands is harmful to the conservation mission of the refuge system.

I am also deeply concerned by the lack of transparency and public accountability afforded in these proposals. Full environmental assessments are not readily available for public review, and the entirety of the public comment period has taken place while Americans are preoccupied with the health of themselves and their loved ones during a global pandemic.

I believe the Administration's continued expansions of hunting and fishing are unnecessary and counterproductive, and they should not move forward. Given the severe impacts on wildlife and the lack of sufficient feedback and oversight, I urge the Department of the Interior to reject this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/as