

November 9, 2021

The Honorable Jay Obernolte
1029 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Obernolte:

Our organizations collectively represent a vast number of Americans – including many of your constituents – who care deeply about wildlife conservation, public lands and public access. We write to urge you to support our proposal to restore hunting access to an important landscape in your district, the Castle Mountains National Monument.

The Castle Mountains are a special place, supporting habitat for quail, chukar, rabbit and mule deer, as well as a population of desert bighorn sheep. Conserving this important habitat is critical. At the same time, access to public hunting land has become increasingly valuable to Californians, and the 2016 Monument designation transferred management from the Bureau of Land Management to the National Park Service, effectively eliminating hunting from this area.

We urge you to correct this error by introducing the attached draft legislation. The proposed bill transfers the current Castle Mountains National Monument boundaries and acreage into the adjacent Mojave National Preserve, which would have the effect of expanding the Preserve and reinstating hunting access, all while maintaining important protections for the Castle Mountains.

This proposal is the culmination of years of effort and collaboration by local stakeholders and will ensure the future of this irreplaceable landscape. With your leadership, Congress can complete this important achievement in conservation by restoring hunting access to this landscape.

The National Park Service has a positive history of working with state wildlife management agencies to provide hunting opportunities on Preserve lands. Placing this land inside the Preserve is both a better cultural fit within the NPS and will promote more efficient management activities. Specifically, we expect this legislation will facilitate guidance from the Department of the Interior to direct management plans in a way that provides greater certainty and consistency for studying, restoring, and actively managing wildlife and their habitats, as well as supporting the future of hunting, fishing, and recreational access across all lands administered by the Department of the Interior.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to resolving this important issue through your leadership.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Bear Trust International
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Conservation Lands Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
National Deer Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Falconers Association
Orion - The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited, Inc.
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute

State Organizations:

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, California Chapter
Black Brant Group
California Bowmen Hunters and State Archery Association
California Deer Association
National Wild Turkey Federation, California Chapter
Safari Club International, California Chapter
Tulare Basin Wetlands Association
Wild Sheep Foundation, California Chapter
The Wildlands Conservancy