Sportsmen’s Groups submitted comments on FWS’s finalized regulations to restrict Alaska’s wildlife management on National Wildlife Refuges (Page 6).

Sportsmen’s groups urge President Trump to include outdoor recreation investments in infrastructure package (Page 7).

Sportsmen’s Policy Updates

- Interior Secretary Zinke meets with CSF and other sportsmen’s groups on day one in office (Page 7).
- Updates on CSF’s Federal Advisory and Conservation Committee Appointments (Page 8).
- Hearing Protection Act gains widespread support from the CSC (Page 7).

Sportsmen’s Policy Packages

- On January 31, the Gulf Angler Focus Group report on alternative management options for red snapper was presented to the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (Page 5).
- CSF Senior Director Chris Horton was appointed to the Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee in early January (Page 8).
- On February 7, CSF joined with the sportfishing community in opposing an Exempted Fishing Permit to allow pelagic long line fishermen in the closed area of the southern Atlantic (Page 6).

Federal Fisheries Policy

- CSF submitted comments on FWS’s finalized regulations to restrict Alaska’s wildlife management on National Wildlife Refuges (Page 6).
## State Policy

### Crossbows

*(Page 9)*

- Illinois (H 1771, H 2893, H 3399/S 1466), Massachusetts (SB 429, SB 447), New Hampshire (HB 392, HB 428), New York (AB 479/SB 1386), West Virginia (SB 325/HB 2696)

### Families Afield Apprentice Hunting

*(Page 10)*

- Maryland (HB 1427), New York (AB 477/SB 3156) Oregon (HB 2566), North Dakota (HB 1204)

### Handgun Carry While Archery Hunting

*(Page 11)*

- Illinois (H 406), Vermont (H 44)

### Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact

*(Page 12)*

- Nebraska (LB 566)

### Knife Definitions And Preemption

*(Page 12)*

- Colorado (SB 008), New York (SB 4769/AB 5667), Virginia (HB 1432/SB 1347, SB 865), West Virginia (HB 2209)

### Lead Bans

*(Page 13)*

- California (AB 1544), Connecticut (HB 5876), Minnesota (HB 1356)

### Recreational Angling Issues

*(Page 14)*

- Alabama (Gill Netting, HB 311), California (Local Regulation of Recreational Fishing, SB 234), Georgia (NOAA Fisheries, HR 642), North Carolina (Modernizing Coastal Fisheries Management), South Carolina (South Atlantic Federal Fishery, HB 3856)

### Right to Hunt, Fish, Trap

*(Page 15)*

- Maine (H 12), Michigan (JSR G), Montana (SB 236), Nevada (SJR 11), New Jersey (ACR 91), New Mexico (SJR 15), New York (AB 534/SB 1153), Washington (SJR 8206), West Virginia (HJR 14)

### State Wildlife Councils for Public Education

*(Page 16)*

- Nevada (SB 221), New York (SB 3986)

### Sunday Hunting

*(Page 17)*

- Connecticut (HB 5499), Maine (H 78, H145, H 304, H 348, H 485), Maryland (HB 305, HB 310, HB 312, HB 788, HB 894, SB 844), Massachusetts (SB 433), North Carolina, Pennsylvania (SB 123, SB 453), West Virginia (SB 345)
**Suppressors** *(Page 19)*
- California (AB 1471), Connecticut (H 6336), Delaware, Hawaii (HB 1589), Illinois (HB 2481), Massachusetts (H 763, H 789, S 1317, S 1340), New York (SB 1209, AB 5300), Rhode Island (S 399), Tennessee (SB 921, HB 11), Vermont (H 31)

**Trophy Importation Bans** *(Page 21)*
- Connecticut (SB 942), New York (SB 120/AB 5116, SB 1883/AB 4010)

**Other Policy Issues by State** *(Page 22)*
- Alabama (Nonresident College Student Hunting License, HB 3)
- Arkansas (Dog Breeder Bill, HB 1715)
- Colorado (Predator Management)
- Connecticut (Ivory Ban, HB 6335)
- Delaware (Game Meat Donation Liability Exemption, HB 27)
- Georgia (Outdoor Stewardship Act, HB 332)
- Idaho (College Student Nonresident Discounted Hunting and Fishing Licenses)
- Idaho (Fee Lock-Depredation-Sportsmen’s Access Legislation, HB 230)
- Nebraska (Mountain Lion Bill, JB 448)
- Nevada (Wildlife Management Bill, AB 101)
- North Carolina (Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Management Plan Revision)
- Oregon (Hunting Mountain Lions with Hounds, HB 2107, HB 2589, SB 371, SB 458)
- Oregon (Allowable Composition of Gasoline for Sale in Oregon, SB 19)
- Pennsylvania (License Fee Setting Authority, SB 30, SB 192)
- Tennessee (Revenue Reimbursement to Wildlife Resources Agencies, H 468)

**CSF Events** *(Page 25)*
- SHOT Show Reception
- Changing of the Guard Dinner
- Welcome to Congress Reception
- Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus Reception
- Illinois Wild Game Dinner
Introduction

The following document summarizes the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation’s (CSF) recent and ongoing policy work at the federal and state level from January to March 2017. By working with the Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus (CSC) in Washington with 268 Members; the National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucuses (NASC) with 48 state caucuses and over 2,000 state legislators; and the Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus (GSC), comprised of 31 members, including a lieutenant governor, CSF has continued to advance the interests of sportsmen and women and serve as their voice in the halls of government.

Federal Policy

115th Congress Congressional Sportsmen’s Caucus Leadership
The CSC leadership for the 115th Congress consists of Co-Chairs Senators Jim Risch (R-ID) and Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Congressmen Jeff Duncan (R-SC) and Gene Green (D-TX). The Vice-Chairs include Senators Deb Fischer (R-NE) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND) and Congressmen Austin Scott (R-GA) and Marc Veasey (D-TX).

Sportsmen’s Packages
Unfortunately, the 114th Congress did not compromise on a sportsmen’s package before the end of the year, despite the sportsmen’s community urging movement of the package to both House and Senate leadership.

In January, 40 sportsmen’s conservation organizations from the American Wildlife Conservation Partners (AWCP) and Fishnet, including CSF, sent letters to House and Senate leadership, encouraging Congress to develop and pass a sportsmen’s package this year. CSF and partners are currently working with CSC leadership to develop a package with several sportsmen’s priorities.

Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Management
On January 31, the Gulf Angler Focus Group (GAFG) presented a summary of its newly released report, which explores alternative management options for the recreational red snapper fishery, during the Gulf of Mexico Management Council meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The full report was developed by CSF, the American Sportfishing Association, the Coastal Conservation Association, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership. The report, titled, “Examination of Possible Private Recreational Management Options for Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper,” is intended to provide fisheries managers with an objective review of possible alternatives for managing the fishery. While some options may have potential to improve fishing access more than others, none appear to be an all-encompassing solution, and some may not be acceptable or practical for the majority of private recreational anglers.

The Council’s newly formed Ad Hoc Red Snapper Private Angler Advisory Panel will be provided with the report findings as they begin deliberations on potential Council actions to address the short recreational red snapper season in the Gulf of Mexico.

Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization
CSF has been working with the American Sportfishing Association, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Coastal Conservation Association and the National Marine Manufacturers Association to develop a standalone, recreational fishing bill that would amend the problematic provisions of the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA) for recreational anglers. Attempts to reauthorize MSA in the 114th involved all sectors jockeying to have their changes included, while environmental groups were advocating to keep the status quo, in a larger reauthorization bill. The sheer complexities of MSA made it difficult for the average angler to understand and
follow the reauthorization efforts. By producing a standalone bill that seeks to amend MSA, not reauthorize, and only contains provisions to benefit the recreational angling community, it will be much easier to secure grassroots support from anglers and the fishing industry. In addition, in an effort to broaden the scope of the bill to include recreational boaters, boating safety provision supported by the boating industry have been included in the draft language.

The amendments to MSA include:

- Periodic re-examination of sector allocations within the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.
- Clarifies to NOAA and the Councils that they should consider alternative management measures for the recreational fishery, like harvest rates and other management strategies successfully employed by the states, when poundage-based quotas fail to adequately manage the recreational sector.
- Places a moratorium on catch shares in the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.
- Provides for better flexibility in rebuilding timelines to provide more angler access while still meeting conservation goals.
- Provide flexibility with the application of Annual Catch Limits (ACL’s) to take into account ecological, social and economic implications.
- Would establish more rigid criteria and better peer review for Exempted Fishing Permits (EFP’s), which have been misused by some commercial and for-hire sectors to circumvent the council process.
- Cooperative Management - would require the Secretary of Commerce to provide a report to Congress on how they are better integrating data from the states, academia and anglers/commercial fishermen in management decisions.
- Would transition some of the existing federal funding for angler harvest data to the states for the continued development of their more accurate angler harvest information programs.

Boating safety provisions include:

- Requires the use of kill switch devices for boats under 26 feet in length and that are equipped with such devices.
- Encourages the U.S. Coast Guard to identify additional options for visual signaling device. Currently, only flares are approved and required for recreational boats.

Draft bill language has been finalized after consultation with Hill staff, and sponsors/co-sponsors in the Senate and House are being strategically explored.

**Exempted Fishing Permit for Pelagic Long Lines in South Atlantic**

On February 7, CSF joined with the recreational angling community in opposing an Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP) application that would allow six (6) commercial fishing vessels to make over 1,000 pelagic long line sets in the East Florida Coast PLL Closed Area. This area was originally closed because of significant overfishing of the swordfish population by pelagic long line commercial fishing.

The federal EFP process is rife with examples of abuse and attempts to circumvent established management processes. An EFP simply needs the approval of NOAA to proceed, regardless of how a Council votes. For this reason, we have developed language included in the MSA amendments noted above to address this problem.

**USFWS Hunting and Trapping Rules on NWR Lands in Alaska**

On February 16, the U.S. House of Representatives approved House Joint (H.J.) Resolution 69 with a bipartisan vote (225-193), which would nullify the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) rule, “Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.”
Prior to House approval of this Resolution, 27 sportsmen’s conservation organization from the American Wildlife Conservation Partners wrote to Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in support of H.J. Resolution 69. The National Assembly of Sportsmen’s Caucus (NASC) Executive Council, representing 48 state legislative sportsmen’s caucuses and over 2,000 state legislators, also submitted a letter in support of this Resolution. This Resolution will now move to the Senate for debate and a hopeful floor vote.

**Trump Administration Engagement**

CSF worked closely with the Trump transition team to nominate and confirm Congressman Ryan Zinke (MT), a friend to the sportsmen’s community, as Secretary of the Interior. On January 18, more than 40 AWCP groups expressed their support and encouraged the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to vote favorably for Secretary Zinke’s confirmation, prior to the Committee hearing.

One day after his confirmation, Secretary Zinke invited a selection of leaders from the sportsmen’s community to his office for a meeting, including CSF President Jeff Crane, where he signed two Secretarial Orders benefiting the sportsmen’s community. Order 3346 overturns the recent ban lead ammunition and fish tackle used on Fish and Wildlife Service lands, waters, and facilities. Order 3347 advances conservation stewardship, improves game and habitat management, and increases outdoor recreation opportunities by directing bureaus and agencies to immediately identify areas where outdoor recreation can be expanded. The order also requests the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC) and Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council (SFBPC) to provide recommendations on enhancing and expanding access on public lands and improving habitat for fish and wildlife.

CSF has also worked closely with our partners in the sportfishing community to identify and nominate qualified individuals for Department of Commerce positions that oversee fisheries management authority within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). CSF supported Dr. Kelly Lucas, formerly of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, as a candidate for the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Conservation and Management. CSF also supported Mr. Robert Barham, former Louisiana Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus member and Secretary of Louisiana’s Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, as a candidate for Assistant Administrator of Fisheries for NOAA.

**Trump Administration Infrastructure Package**

On February 15, fifty-six sportsmen’s conservation organizations, including CSF, urged President Trump to integrate strategic investments in America’s outdoor economy into the upcoming infrastructure package.

Specifically, the letter to the President encouraged the Administration to dedicate five percent ($5 billion annually) of the $1 trillion infrastructure package towards natural infrastructure and conservation investments. These investments include: The Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (Investing $1.3 billion a year to restoration projects for critical species conservation); and advancing the Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act (a package of pro-sportsmen’s legislation); among other investments.

Finally, the signatories encouraged expanding public access on lands and waterways. Outdoor recreation generates more than $646 billion for the nation’s economy, supports 6.1 million jobs, and is a tradition for 140 million Americans including 40 million hunters and anglers. Ensuring public access to public lands and waters is critical to this robust economic engine of outdoor traditions.

**The Hearing Protection Act**

In January, the Hearing Protection Act was introduced by CSC leadership, led by Congressman Jeff Duncan (SC), in the House (H.R. 367). This legislation would provide America's sportsmen and women with easier
access to firearm suppressors by removing them from the scope of the National Firearms Act (NFA), replacing the outdated federal transfer process with an instantaneous NICS background check. In doing so, law-abiding citizens will remain able to purchase suppressors, while prohibited persons will continue to be barred from purchasing or possessing them. The HPA also includes a provision to refund the $200 transfer tax to applicants who purchase a suppressor after October 22, 2015, which was the original date of introduction.

By mid-March, this bill has gained the support of over 121 cosponsors, 75% of whom are CSC Members. The Senate counterpart of this bill (S. 59) was introduced by CSC Member Senator Mike Crapo (ID), and now includes 11 cosponsors, 75% being CSC Members. Presently, between the two bills, five of the eight CSC Leaders are signed-on in support (Congressmen Jeff Duncan, Gene Green, and Austin Scott; and, Senators Jim Risch, and Deb Fischer).

On February 22, the NASC Executive Council President Representative Brandon Phelps (IL), on behalf of his colleagues on the Executive Council, submitted a letter to CSC Members urging their support of this legislation. The letter discusses the many reasons why the NASC Executive Council supports easing the regulation of this hearing-protection technology and the resounding success that NASC member caucuses have had in passing pro-suppressor legislation at the state level in recent years.

**Federal Advisory and Conservation Committee Appointments**

- **Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC)**
  Jeff Crane is a member, and Gary Kania is an alternate member of the Wildlife and Hunting Heritage Conservation Council (WHHCC) appointed by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture, joining 17 other hunting conservation leaders. This group was established in 2010 to advise the departments on wildlife conservation, habitat conservation and hunting. Federal Land Policy Senior Director Andy Treharne is a member of the WHHCC’s Recruitment and Retention Subcommittee.

- **Marine Protected Area Federal Advisory Committee**
  CSF’s Senior Fisheries Program Director Chris Horton was recently appointed to serve on NOAA’s Marine Protected Areas FAC. This FAC advises the Secretaries of Commerce and Interior on the development and implementation of the National System of Marine Protected Areas.

- **National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC)**
  CSF’s Senior Director, Northeastern States, Brent Miller is a member of the National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee, which provides input to the Secretary of Agriculture on USDA’s Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services’ policies and decision-making related to agriculture, wildlife management, and animal welfare.

- **Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish & Wildlife Resources**
  Jeff Crane is a member of the Blue Ribbon Panel, a group of organized by the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, of 27 business and conservation leaders who discuss and provide advice on the future of fish and wildlife conservation, and options for sustained funding.

- **American Wildlife Conservation Partners**
  CSF is a member organization of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners, a group of 47 top wildlife conservation organizations in the country. CSF joins AWCP organizations on letters related to a number of sportsmen’s issues and policies. Since January 2017, CSF has signed on to the following AWCP letters:
o On January 12, a letter to Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee supported
Congressman Ryan Zinke’s nomination for Secretary of the Interior
o On January 26, a letter was sent to both the House and Senate Committees that worked on
moving the Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act during the 114th Congress, and urged them to quickly
develop a package in the new Congress.
o On February 6, a letter supporting House Joint Resolution 69, to nullify the Fish and Wildlife
Rule, “Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on
National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska” was sent to House leadership.
o On February 12, a letter supporting the confirmation of Sonny Perdue for Secretary of
Agriculture was sent to Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee
o On February 15, a letter sent to President Donald Trump encouraged sportsmen’s priorities for
conservation be included in the infrastructure package.

• National Wild Pig Task Force
CSF Southeastern States Director Bee Frederick serves on the National Wild Pig Task Force (NWPTF). NWPTF is a technical, scientific, and leadership alliance of federal, tribal, provincial, state and private conservation partners working to control, reduce damage caused by, or in some instances eradicate free-ranging populations of wild pigs in North America.

State Policy

Crossbows
Over the last several years, state legislative sportsmen’s caucus members from throughout the nation have worked with SPT staff to expand opportunities for America’s sportsmen and women to hunt with crossbows. Moving forward, CSF staff will continue to encourage states to expand crossbow use, and will work to educate caucus leaders on the many benefits of crossbows. Several states have worked on the issue in 2017, including:

• Illinois
Illinois has seen several legislative efforts to expand the use of crossbows for sportsmen in the state already this year. IL H 1771, IL H 2893, (H 2893 sponsored by Illinois Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member Representative Jerry Costello) and IL H 3399/IL S 1466 (sponsored by Illinois Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member Senator Neil Anderson) all provide for more opportunities to use crossbows in Illinois.

• Massachusetts (SB 429, SB 447)
In Massachusetts, Caucus Co-Chair Senator Anne Gobi introduced SB 429, which would authorize the use of crossbows for hunting in the state, subject to rules and regulations adopted by the state fish and wildlife agency. Also in Massachusetts, Caucus Member Senator Donald Humason is carrying SB 447, which would likewise authorize the use of crossbows for hunting in the state, subject to rules and regulations adopted by the state fish and wildlife agency. Both bills have been assigned to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture.

• New Hampshire (HB 392, HB 428)
In New Hampshire, two bills were introduced early in the session to expand crossbow use. HB 392 would have expanded crossbow use to the traditional archery season for all hunters by treating crossbows as archery equipment. Unfortunately HB 392 failed to pass the House on February 9. However, HB 428 is still active, and would allow hunters over the age of 68 years old to use crossbows
in the archery season. HB 428 passed the House on **February 15** and is now awaiting consideration by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

- **New York (AB 479/SB 1386)**
  New York has introduced a pair of “same-as” bills to reclassify crossbows as legal archery implements. Under the law that was passed in 2014, crossbows were incorrectly categorized as firearms which has resulted in those who wish to hunt with a crossbow having to purchase both a muzzleloader stamp as well as an archery stamp in order to do so. Reclassifying them as archery equipment will eliminate this redundancy and bring the cost of entry down for those wishing to hunt with a crossbow in the state. In the Assembly, **Caucus Co-Chair, Assembly Member Aileen Gunther** is carrying AB 479, and, in the **Senate, Caucus Member Senator Patrick Gallivan** is carrying SB 1386. CSF is working alongside the New York Sportsmen’s Advisory Council, which has identified this issue as one of their top priorities for the 2017 session, to advance these bills in the months ahead.

- **West Virginia (SB 325/HB 2696)**
  With the support of the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, **Caucus Co-Chair Senator Mark Maynard** and **Caucus Member Delegate Bill Hamilton** introduced companion bills SB 325 and HB 2696, respectively, to correct technical issues with state law authorizing the use of crossbows during various hunting seasons. SB 325 passed the Senate on February 24 and moved to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources.

**Families Afield – Apprentice Hunting**
Providing potential hunters with an easy opportunity to enter the sport has been a common goal of the hunting community. Legislation that establishes apprentice hunting license programs and the elimination of minimum age requirements is, and will continue to be, a key focus of NASC. While several states have passed effective programs, many more need minor changes to allow the maximum level of participation.

The CSF States Program Team is working to educate caucus leaders and state natural resource agencies on the importance of Families Afield and the apprentice hunting program to reduce hunter recruitment impediments. Additionally, the States Team is working with the Families Afield Coalition (CSF, National Shooting Sports Foundation, National Rifle Association, National Wild Turkey Foundation and Sportsmen’s Alliance) to develop state-specific model language for legislation in several of the coalition-identified target states, as well as exploring opportunities for apprentice hunting program establishment or improvements in the states that have been slower to embrace the Families Afield model.

Over the last several years, members of our state caucuses have introduced many pieces of legislation dealing with the recruitment of new hunters through apprentice hunting license programs that have subsequently been passed into law. Included below is a brief synopsis of a few of the bills state caucuses are working on in **2017**, all of which advance hunting recruitment and retention efforts at the state level:

- **Maryland (HB 1427)**
  On **February 10**, **Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Del. Herb McMillan**, introduced House Bill 1427 to establish a 3-day apprentice hunting permit for hunters under the age of 16 years old. HB 1427 is currently waiting to be heard in the House Committee on Environment and Transportation.
- **New York (AB 477/SB 3156)**
  New York is presently the only state in the nation that requires their youth hunters to reach the age of 14 prior to being able to hunt big game with a firearm. At the age of 12 young hunters are able to hunt big game with archery equipment and are able to hunt small game with a firearm. To assist with recruitment and retention efforts CSF worked alongside the New York Sportsmen’s Advisory Council to educate caucus leadership on this issue and as a result the Co-Chairs of the New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus introduced a pair of matching bills (AB 477/SB 3156) to establish a universal hunting age of 12. CSF is working alongside the New York Sportsmen’s Advisory Council, which has identified this issue as one of their top priorities for the 2017 session, to advance these bills in the months ahead.

- **Oregon (HB 2566)**
  On February 1, Oregon Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Brad Witt introduced HB 2566, a bill that would direct the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to create an adult mentored hunting program in the state of Oregon. The Oregon Sportsmen’s Caucus has made this a priority bill for the 2017 session, and CSF is assisting Caucus leadership and the Oregon Sportsmen’s Caucus coordinator with strategy and policy guidance to help get the bill passed.

- **North Dakota (HB 1204)**
  On January 9, North Dakota Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair Rep. Todd Porter introduced HB 1204 to change the current age restriction on apprentice hunter licenses from 16 years old to 12 years old. The bill has been passed by the House and is currently in the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

**Handgun Carry while Archery Hunting**
The right of personal protection is not relinquished once a bow hunter enters the field. Bow hunters are at a great disadvantage in self-defense related circumstances based on the limitations of the bow and arrow. It is, therefore, especially important that bow hunters be permitted to carry a handgun while afield. Many regions of the United States are inhabited by large predators such as bears and mountain lions, which pose a threat to a bow hunter who is under equipped to properly defend him/herself should an attack occur. Additionally, dangerous human encounters are always a possibility, especially with the rise in backcountry drug labs and narcotic trafficking on public lands. The SPT has made strides on this issue in several states recently, including:

- **Illinois (H 406)**
  IL H 406 would amend the Wildlife Code to allow anyone authorized under the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, or an off-duty law enforcement official or officer, to lawfully possess a concealed firearm while hunting.

- **Vermont (H 44)**
  In Vermont, House Bill 44 (H 44) has been introduced to expand upon the initial allowance for handgun carry while bow hunting that the Vermont Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus successfully passed into law in 2013. H 44 would clarify that carrying a handgun is also allowed following the close of the hunting day if the hunter is authorized to look for a wounded deer or bear after the close of the legal hunting day. At this time the bill has been referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife.
Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact

Despite the strong tradition of ethics that the vast majority of hunters and anglers abide by, there are those that disregard the laws that regulate hunting and fishing. To address these violations, the Interstate Wildlife Violators Compact (IWVC) was created in 1989 to provide a mechanism to allow state fish and wildlife agencies to share information about fish and wildlife violations between the states. The availability of this information helps stop poachers and other violators from moving their illegal activity to another state after receiving a violation elsewhere. In 2017 Nebraska is pursuing legislation on the issue:

- **Nebraska (LB 566)**
  Introduced by the Natural Resources Committee at the behest of the Nebraska Legislative Sportsmen’s Forum, if passed, NE LB 566 will include Nebraska as the newest state in the IWVC. The bill passed the Legislative Committee on Natural Resources on March 8.

Knife Definitions and Preemption

In recent years, many local governments have enacted vague, outdated laws banning the sale, possession, use, and manufacture of many types of knives. It is essential that more states enact laws that preempt local knife laws and make the state the sole authority on knife laws in order to protect knife owners from a patchwork of local restrictions. In 2017, bills have moved in the following states:

- **Colorado (SB 008)**
  On February 16, Andy Treharne worked with Co-Chairs of the Colorado Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus to include a presentation on SB 008, Senator Owen Hill’s legislation to remove the definition of a switchblade from Colorado statute on the agenda for their monthly luncheon. Senator Hill provided a demonstration that included commonly used knives that can be classified as switchblades under existing law. The bill passed the Senate (32-2), passed the House (59-6) and is currently awaiting the Governor’s Signature.

- **New York (SB 4769/AB 5667)**
  Presently, the New York County District Attorney is using a misguided interpretation of the New York gravity knife statute, resulting in over 60,000 people having been arrested over the last decade for common, everyday pocket knives that are perfectly legal throughout New York State except in New York City. To correct this situation, SB 4769/AB 5667 would provide clarity to the existing law, removing the potential for a subjective interpretation of the statute. This legislation does not legalize gravity knives or switchblades, it simply provides a clear definition of which knives are to be classified as switchblades or gravity knives, and which knives are not.

  Similar legislation was advanced last year, and received overwhelming bipartisan support in both chambers. Unfortunately the bill was vetoed by the Governor despite near unanimous votes in both chambers. As we did last year, CSF will be working to educate members of the New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus on the issue throughout the process in hopes of a more favorable outcome this year.

- **Virginia (HB 1432/SB 1347 and SB 865)**
  Delegate Lee Ware and Caucus Co-Chair Delegate Scott Lingamfelter introduced legislation to repeal Virginia’s switchblade ban. HB 1432 was vetoed by the Governor on February 20, but companion bill SB 1347 has also passed both chambers and became eligible for the Governor’s desk on March 7.
VA S 865, which would allow the transfer of switchblade knives between family members or for the purpose of engaging in a sporting event of activity, also became eligible for the Governor’s desk on March 7.

- **West Virginia (HB 2209)**
  Caucus Co-Chair Delegate Rupie Philips introduced legislation on February 7 to preempt municipalities’ power to restrict the purchase, possession, transfer, ownership, carrying, transport, sale and storage of knives. The bill passed the House Committee on Political Subdivisions on March 15 and moved to the House Committee on Judiciary.

**Lead Bans**
Anti-hunting groups cite unfounded allegations that lead is having a detrimental effect on wildlife populations to push for bans on lead ammunition. Of key concern is the potential for these bans to lead to decreased revenue for state fish and wildlife agencies. Specifically, alternative ammunition will lead to higher costs being passed on to the consumer, thus the sales of both firearms and ammunition will be impacted, as will the excise taxes collected through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program – a crucial revenue stream for these agencies. Therefore, these bans should only be considered at such a time when there is irrefutable scientific evidence that lead is having a detrimental population-level impact.

- **California (AB 1544)**
  In response to the continued implementation of California’s lead ammunition ban, California Outdoor Sporting Caucus Co-Chair, Assembly Member Brian Dahle, introduced AB 1544 on February 17, 2017. This bill would empower the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to circumvent the lead ban, which will be fully mandatory on July 1, 2019, by providing lead ammunition if it is determined that certain calibers are not commercially available in specified hunting units. CSF staff will continue to work with the California Outdoor Sporting Caucus to mitigate the impacts of the state’s lead ban and recently-passed ammunition restrictions.

- **Connecticut (HB 5876)**
  On January 29, a bill (HB 5876) that would have had far-reaching impacts on angling by banning all fishing tackle that contains lead was introduced. As originally drafted, the ban would have included all lead sinkers, weighted line, and even fishing reels containing lead. The bill was submitted as a proposed committee bill, meaning that the committee of jurisdiction (in this case the Joint Committee on the Environment) would need to vote to pick it up as a committee bill in order for it to advance. CSF worked alongside our partners in the angling community to distribute a letter to all committee members (including Committee Co-Chair, and Co-Chair of the Connecticut Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus, Sen. Craig Miner) on February 6, 2017. On February 16 we received word that our efforts were successful, and the bill would not be advanced as a committee bill this session.

- **Minnesota (HB 1356)**
  Introduced on February 16, HB 1356 aimed to ban the use of lead ammunition during the regular firearms deer season. The chair of the House Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Policy and Finance did not schedule a hearing for the bill before the March 10 deadline to be heard in committee in a bill’s house of origin. The bill will not be able to move again until session begins in 2018.
Recreational Angling Issues

- **Alabama Gill Netting (HB 311)**
  Under existing law, the issuance of net and seine permits for commercial fishing is limited and certain permits are not transferable under any circumstances including physical hardship, and applicants for renewal are required to have previously purchased a license and to meet certain income requirements in subsequent years. House Bill 311 would delete the requirement for proof of income under Alabama income tax law for renewal of permits. Previously, a deal was brokered to phase out gill-net permits in the 1990s and this legislative attempt to undo those efforts is a concern to the recreational angling community. The bill was reported favorably from the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry on March 9.

- **California – Local Regulation of Recreational Fishing (CA SB 234)**
  California Outdoor Sporting Caucus Member Senator Tom Berryhill introduced SB 234 on February 6. SB 234 would prohibit local agencies from adopting or enforcing ordinances regulating recreational fishing. The bill would also authorize California citizens to bring lawsuits against any local agency that violated this rule, and would empower judges to award attorney’s fees as well as damages to the prevailing party. As of this writing. AB 234 is currently scheduled to be considered by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water.

- **Georgia – NOAA Fisheries Resolution (HR 642)**
  Georgia Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus House Chair, and House Committee on Game, Fish, and Parks Chair, Representative David Knight introduced a resolution that recommends NOAA Fisheries to rescind the closure of federal Waters of offshore for the period from April 15, 2017, through May 31, 2017, and to allow anglers and saltwater fishing guides a fair and equitable opportunity to enjoy a public resource in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. HR 642 was introduced on March 16 and currently is assigned to the House Committee on Game, Fish, and Parks.

- **North Carolina - Modernizing Coastal Fisheries Management**
  Legislative efforts to reform coastal fisheries management, including, inter alia, recreational gillnetting and shrimp trawling, are underway in earnest this year. CSF staff has been working with in-state partners (CCA NC, NCWF) to vet bill language that will be introduced this year with the support of a broad coalition of national groups, in-state NGOs and in-state businesses. The commercial fishing interests in the state have successfully quelled legislative reform efforts in the past, but House Majority Leader and North Carolina Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair Representative John Bell has been engaged on the issue, and CSF staff and partners will continue to work the issue as it unfolds this year.

- **South Carolina - South Atlantic Federal Fishery (HB 3856)**
  Sponsored by South Carolina Legislative Caucus members Representatives Lee Hewitt, Alana Clemmons, Philip Lowe, Richard Yow, Wallace Jordan, Roger Kirby, and William Hixon, the resolution opposes the privatization of South Atlantic Federal Fishery resources through catch share management and efforts through exempted fishing permits or other means to conduct pilot catch share programs or studies. The resolution passed the House on March 7 and awaits consideration in the Senate.
Right to Hunt/Fish/Trap

Though hunting, fishing and trapping have long been cherished American traditions, only recently has the “right” to hunt, fish, and trap come into question. Anti-hunting, fishing, and trapping organizations have recently been working to turn hunting, fishing, and trapping into a privilege subject to social pressures and prevailing public sentiments and not an inherent right.

In 2015, several state legislatures considered constitutional measures that would protect the right of citizens to hunt, fish, and trap. Members of the Nevada Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus successfully passed SJR 11, which would amend the Nevada Constitution to include the rights to hunt, fish, and trap. The bill will need to pass again during the 2017 session before being referred to the ballot in 2018 for a vote of the general public. Additionally, Sportsmen’s Caucus members in Indiana, Oregon and Texas were heavily involved in drafting and promoting bills that if passed, would have given voters the opportunity to weigh in on constitutional protections for sportsmen in their respective states. CSF staff has assisted in these efforts by providing sportsmen’s caucus legislators with constitutional language from other states and by working closely with state-based sportsmen’s organizations to identify strategies that will help organize and enhance these efforts in state capitols and when the time comes, at the ballot box. 2015 saw voters approve a constitutional right to hunt and fish in Texas. 2016 saw efforts over the last few years by Chris Horton and members of the Kansas and Indiana Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucuses pay off as voters in both Kansas and Indiana added the Right to Hunt, Fish, and Harvest Wildlife to each respective state’s constitution. Caucus members and CSF staff were heavily involved.

2017 efforts on right to hunt and fish constitutional amendments are detailed below:

- **Maine (H 12)**
  On January 4, Caucus Co-Chair Representative Steve Wood introduced H 12, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Maine to establish the right to hunt and fish. At this time H 12 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **Michigan (JSR G)**
  Caucus Member Senator Dave Hildenbrand introduced SJR G on March 8, which proposes amending the Constitution of Michigan to recognize a right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife. The resolution has been referred to the Senate Committee on Outdoor Recreation and Tourism.

- **Montana (SB 236)**
  In January of 2017, Montana Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member Sen. Jennifer Fielder announced that she would be pushing a bill to solidify the right to hunt, fish, and trap in the Montana state bill of rights. CSF provided in-state partners with educational materials meant to assist in the support of such legislation. After the bill, SB 236, was released on February 9, there was some concern that the draft language may negatively affect the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, and Park’s ability to manage fish and wildlife. The draft language of the bill is still in discussion after a February 16 hearing, and CSF remains engaged in assisting partners such as RMEF and NRA in making sure the bill is worded in a manner that will not negatively affect the state’s ability to manage fish and wildlife. Pending the language revision, the bill may become a priority bill for the Montana Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus.

- **Nevada (SJR 11)**
  In 2015, the Nevada Legislature successfully passed SJR 11, a bill introduced by Nevada Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Cho-Chair Senator Scott Hammond that would put a right to hunt and fish...
constitutional amendment on the ballot in Nevada. The Nevada Constitution requires that constitutional amendments originating in the legislature must be passed in two consecutive sessions. As the Nevada Legislature convenes every other year, **SJR 11** will be considered again this session, and must be passed again in order to be included on the 2018 ballot. CSF staff continue to work with the Nevada Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus and the sportsmen’s community to monitor the progress of **SJR 11**.

- **New Jersey (ACR 91)**
  On January 27, 2016, Assembly Member Maria Rodriguez-Gregg introduced Assembly Concurrent Resolution 91, which proposes a constitutional amendment to preserve the right of the people to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife. The resolution was assigned to the Assembly Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources and is still awaiting a hearing. CSF will work with in-state partners and Caucus leadership in New Jersey to monitor any progress of the resolution in 2017.

- **New Mexico (SJR 15)**
  On **January 30**, New Mexico Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair, **Senator George Munoz**, introduced **SJR 15**, legislation that would recognize that the citizens of New Mexico have the right to hunt and fish. Prior to introduction, CSF worked with New Mexico Caucus members to highlight the need for coordination amongst the sportsmen’s community and also shared CSF’s informational materials and recommended language for the measure. Unfortunately, the language of the measure as introduced was not consistent with these recommendations and the bill did not advance prior to adjournment on **March 18**.

- **New York (AB 534/SB 1153)**
  On **January 9, 2017**, Co-Chair of the New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus, **Assembly Member Aileen Gunther**, introduced AB 534 and was referred to the Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation. Matching legislation (SB 1153) was introduced by **Caucus Member Senator Robert Ortt** on **January 6** and was referred to the Senate Committee on Judiciary.

- **Washington (SJR 8206)**
  On **February 16**, a resolution was introduced in the Washington Senate that would amend the state’s constitution to protect the right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, based on educational materials that CSF had provided to in-state sportsmen’s partners. While in-state lobbyists have confirmed that the bill is likely dead this year, CSF has been working with both in-state and national partners to coordinate discussions on a long-term strategy for potentially getting the bill passed in a future legislative session and subsequently passed on a general election ballot.

- **West Virginia (HJR 14)**
  CSF staff worked with West Virginia DNR staff and Caucus leadership in the summer of 2015 to properly vet Right to Hunt/Fish/Trap legislation, and the DNR was supportive of the effort and the proposed language from CSF/NRA/AFWA. Multiple RTHF bills were introduced in 2016, including one sponsored by a Caucus Chair, but ultimately all three bills did not advance. This year Delegate Isaac Sponaugle again introduced RTHF legislation, but it has not moved since the initial introduction. CSF staff will continue working on this issue in West Virginia.

**State Wildlife Councils for Public Education**

In late 2014, CSF introduced an issue brief on wildlife councils for public education, such as the Hug-a-Hunter model utilized by Colorado and the recently adopted Michigan Wildlife Council. These programs seek to educate the non-hunting and angling public on the numerous benefits that sportsmen and women provide for
conservation. Such education campaigns are among the best ways to ensure hunting, angling, and trapping opportunities for the future.

Thus far, in 2017, state wildlife councils have been pursued in the following state:

- **Nevada (SB 221)**
  After a similar bill failed to cross the finish line in 2015, Senator Mo Denis, Co-Chair of the Nevada Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus introduced SB 221 on February 27. SB 221 would establish a Nevada Wildlife Public Education Council, funded through the Department of Wildlife’s Heritage fund. The Council would develop and carry out a public information program to educate, promote and engage the residents of this State concerning the responsible and stewardship of wildlife in this State. CSF is working closely with other sportsmen’s NGOs in the state of Nevada to monitor the bill and encourage its passage.

- **New York (SB 3986)**
  On January 31, Senator Rich Funke, a Member of the New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus introduced SB 3986. SB 3986 creates the “I love NY Outdoors” program and requires the Commissioner of Economic Development to develop a marketing strategy that would promote New York as a premiere destination for hunting and fishing. Further, the language appropriates $2,500,000 for the development and implementation of the program. At this time the bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

**Sunday Hunting**

Sunday hunting has been, and will continue to be, a key focal area for the SPT. Sunday hunting bans are one of the last remaining examples of the puritanical blue laws that were initially designed to encourage church attendance. Today most of the blue laws have been repealed; however, Sunday hunting restrictions remain in 11 states.

Over the past several years, CSF has repeatedly engaged the issue of Sunday hunting restrictions, working alongside the Sunday Hunting Coalition. Brent Miller, Alana Barricks, Bee Frederick, and John Culclasure have been working both with NASC member caucuses and the Sunday Hunting Coalition to educate lawmakers on the benefits of allowing hunting on Sundays.

CSF remains focused on Sunday hunting as a high-priority issue and continues to support states attempting to eliminate restrictions in 2017:

- **Connecticut (HB 5499)**
  In 2017, Members of the Connecticut Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus are once again working to expand Sunday hunting in the state, following a successful effort in 2015 that authorized Sunday archery hunting for deer. HB 5499 was introduced on January 12, and is co-sponsored by (among others) Caucus Co-Chair Representative Linda Orange. HB 5499 would expand Sunday hunting to all species on private property, and would expand the method of take to include firearms. On March 6 the bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Environment, and CSF Senior Director, Northeastern State submitted written testimony. At the time of this writing results from the Committee hearing have not yet been released.

- **Maine (H 78, H 145, H 304, H 348, H 485)**
  In the 2017 session, several bills have thus far been introduced in Maine to eliminate restrictions on Sunday hunting, as detailed below:
- **H 78** – Introduced by Representative David Harold McCrea on **January 10**, to allow licensed hunters to hunt wild birds on Sundays with a shotgun. At this time H 78 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **H 145** – Introduced by Representative David G. Hagan on **January 20**, to create an exception to the prohibition against hunting wild birds on Sunday; and, to allow hunting wild birds on Sunday in Aroostook County and in unorganized townships in the counties of Piscataquis, Somerset, Franklin, Oxford, Kennebec, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Androscoggin, Cumberland and York. At this time H 145 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **H 304** – Introduced by Representative Jeffrey K. Pierce on **February 3**, to authorize the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to allow hunting on Sunday; and to direct the commissioner to allow hunting on 5 Sundays for the respective hunting seasons for bear, moose, deer and wild turkey in coastal wildlife management areas on public land and private land of 5 acres or more with the landowner’s permission. At this time H 304 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **H 348** – Introduced by Representative Jeffrey K. Pierce on **February 7**, to allow Sunday hunting migratory game birds. At this time H 348 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **H 485** – Introduced by Representative Kent Ackley on **February 24**, to create a local opt-in system for Sunday hunting that would allow for municipalities to petition the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to allow firearms hunting for deer in their jurisdiction. At this time H 485 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

- **Maryland (HB 305, HB 310, HB 312, HB 788, HB 894, SB 844)**

  The 2017 session is seeing a fair amount of activity on Sunday hunting. Several county bills are described below:

  - **HB 305** – Introduced by **Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Delegate Jay Jacobs**, HB 305 would authorize turkey hunting on private property in Kent County on Sundays during the spring turkey season. The bill reported favorably out of the Committee on Environment and Transportation on **March 6**.

  - **HB 310** – On **January 25**, the Montgomery County Delegation introduced HB 310 to authorize the Maryland Department of Natural Resources permit deer hunting on specified Sundays on private property in Montgomery County.

  - **HB 312** – Introduced by **Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Delegate Jay Jacobs**, HB 312 would authorize turkey hunting on private property in Kent County on Sundays during the spring turkey season. The bill reported favorably out of the Committee on Environment and Transportation on **March 6**.

  - **HB 788** – The Montgomery County Delegation introduced HB 788 to allow residents who hold a valid Deer Management Permit to hunt on any Sunday throughout the year in Charles County and St. Mary’s County. The bill reported favorably out of the Committee on Environment and Transportation on **March 6**.

  - **HB 894** – On **February 6**, the Wicomico County Delegation introduced HB 894 to allow deer hunting on private property on specified Sundays in Wicomico County. The bill remains in the Committee on Environment and Transportation awaiting a hearing.

  - **SB 844** – **Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Sen. Jim Mathias**, introduced SB 844 on **February 3** to would authorize a person to hunt deer under a Deer Management Permit on any Sunday throughout the year in Charles County and St. Mary’s County. SB 844 was scheduled for a hearing on **February 28** in the Committee on Education, Health and Environmental Affairs but has not been voted on at this time.
• **Massachusetts (SB 433)**
  In Massachusetts, Senate Bill 433 (SB 433) has been introduced by Senator Anne Gobi, Co-Chair of the Massachusetts Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus to authorize archery hunting for deer on Sundays. At this time SB 433 has been referred to the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture.

• **North Carolina (To be introduced in 2017)**
  CSF staff is working closely with a coalition (NSSF, NRA, SCI, Delta Waterfowl, and in-state partners) and Representative John Bell, Co-Chair of the North Carolina Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus on legislation to transfer regulatory authority for Sunday hunting from the legislature to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. Bill language is currently being drafted, and CSF will be working this issue heavily during the 2017 long session.

• **Pennsylvania (SB 123, SB 453)**
  Senate Bill 123, legislation to repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania, was introduced on January 12 by Pennsylvania Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Sen. Mario Scavello. On January 31, CSF’s Mid-Atlantic States Coordinator met with the Majority Chair of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee, Sen. Pat Stefano, as well as the Minority Chair and Pennsylvania Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair, Sen. Jim Brewster, to discuss support for Sunday hunting. SB 123 was unanimously passed out of the Senate Committee on Game and Fisheries on February 1. The bill remains in the Senate on second consideration at this time. On February 28, Sen. Brewster introduced Senate Bill 453, to repeal the prohibition on Sunday hunting. CSF is working with Senator Brewster’s office to provide support as well as with Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus Member Governor Tom Wolf’s sportsmen’s advisor to closely monitor the bill. The bill remains in committee and has not been voted on at this time.

• **West Virginia (SB 345)**
  Five Sunday hunting bills with minor variations were introduced in 2017, and West Virginia Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair Senator Mark Maynard’s bill (SB 345) passed the Senate on March 1. SB 345 would permit statewide Sunday hunting on private lands with the written permission of the landowner. Currently, private lands Sunday hunting is allowed in 33 of West Virginia’s 55 counties. NSSF’s contract lobbyist for Sunday hunting is working the issue in conjunction with CSF staff. Additionally, the West Virginia Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus is holding a policy breakfast meeting on March 22 at which Sunday hunting will be front and center. SB 345 is awaiting consideration in the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, and CSF staff will continue to provide support for advancing Sunday hunting during the 2017 session.

**Suppressors**
There are currently 42 states that allow civilian possession of suppressors, with 40 of these states permitting their use for hunting. Through active engagement by state caucus members, and in collaboration with CSF staff and our industry partners, several states have advanced this issue in recent years.

In 2017, many states have collaborated with CSF to provide their sportsmen and women with access to this hearing-protection technology, including:

• **California (AB 1471)**
  Assembly Member Travis Allen, a Member of the California Outdoor Sporting Caucus, introduced AB 1471 in early 2017. AB 1471 would decriminalize the sale of suppressors by authorized manufacturers and dealers in the state. In December of 2016, CSF participated in a demonstration of
suppressors hosted in the Sacramento area by ASA President Knox Williams. It is unclear at this time whether or not AB 1471 will be passed into law, as it has not been heard in any committees since being introduced in February. CSF is working closely with Bill Gaines, ASA, and other sportsmen’s groups in California to monitor the bill’s progress. CSF is currently in the process of drafting a letter of support to submit should the bill advance to committee later in the session.

- **Connecticut (H 6336)**
  Presently Connecticut is one of only two states (the other being Vermont) that allows their citizens to own and use suppressors for recreational shooting purposes, but not for hunting. H 6336, co-sponsored by Sen. Craig Miner (Caucus Co-Chair and former NASC Executive Council Member) seeks to authorize their use for hunting as well, and was introduced on January 23. At this time it appears unlikely that the bill will advance as stand-alone legislation this session. However, CSF and our partners are currently looking for opportunities to host a legislative shoot to educate members on suppressor technology, and will be looking for opportunities to amend the language into another piece of legislation as the session progresses to continue the conversation.

- **Delaware**
  The Delaware Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chairs have expressed a high level of interest in pursuing suppressor legislation. Delaware is currently one of eight states that do not permit firearms suppressor ownership. At the request of the Caucus Co-Chairs, CSF hosted a policy forum on firearms suppressors on March 23. CSF is currently working to organize a legislative suppressor demonstration for the Delaware and Maryland Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucuses and continues to provide information to educate Caucus Co-Chairs, who have indicated that they will pursue legislation in the 2017 legislative session.

- **Hawaii (HB 1589)**
  HI HB 1589 was introduced on January 25, and would authorize licensed hunters who comply with state firearms law to possess and use firearm noise suppressors while hunting, as well as authorize the manufacture and sale of firearm noise suppressors for licensed hunters who comply with state firearms law. HB 1589 was passed out of committee on a unanimous vote, but failed to meet a legislative deadline, and is now dead.

- **Illinois (HB 2481)**
  Introduced by Illinois Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair and NASC Executive Council President Representative Brandon Phelps, HB 2481 seeks to legalize the use of suppressors for hunting in Illinois. HB 2481 currently resides in committee.

- **Massachusetts (H 763, H 789, S 1317, S 1340)**
  Following up on some positive forward movement in 2016 when a suppressor bill sponsored by Caucus Member Senator Donald Humason received a favorable committee report, this year sees four individual pieces of pro-suppressor legislation in Massachusetts. All four bills are either sponsored or co-sponsored by members of the Massachusetts Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus. At this time two of the bills have been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary, and two have been referred to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security.

- **New York (SB 1209, AB 5300)**
  On January 9, 2017 New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Member, Senator Robert Ortt, introduced SB 1209. As originally introduced the bill would only have applied to suppressor ownership in the state. CSF worked with Sen. Ortt’s office to have the bill amended on January 13 to include
hunting as well, and we are now comfortable with the language as written. AB 5300 was then introduced by Assembly Member Michael J. Norris on February 7, and includes much less favorable language. For 2017, CSF will be focusing on beginning the conversation surrounding suppressors in New York by focusing on the Senate bill. We are currently working with Caucus leadership in the Senate and Sen. Ortt’s office to sign up additional co-sponsors and educate the members of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation. Our goal for year one is to get the bill heard in Committee, reported out favorable, and sent to the Senate floor for a broader discussion. Given the political realities in New York we recognize that final passage will likely require 3-4 years of education and a change in Administration.

- **Rhode Island (S 399)**
  In Rhode Island, S 399 has been introduced by Senator Stephen R. Archambault to allow for both the possession of suppressors and their use while hunting. Unfortunately the bill as drafted places arbitrary restrictions on the length a firearm must be to have a suppressor affixed to it (likely in an attempt to prevent concealed carry of suppressed firearms). As such, CSF will not be supporting the language as written, but will be working with our partners and the bill sponsor to amend the bill favorably in the session ahead. Presently S 399 has been referred to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary.

- **Tennessee (SB 921 & HB 11)**
  Sponsored by Tennessee Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus members Sen. Steve Southerland and Representative Tilman Goins the legislation would delete the prohibition on possession, manufacture, transport, repair, or sale of a firearm silencer. The senate bill was assigned to the Senate Committee on Judiciary on February 13 where it is to be heard on March 21, and the house version was assigned to the Committee on House Committee on Civil Justice on January 24.

- **Vermont (H 31)**
  Following the legalization of suppressor ownership in 2015 – championed by Caucus Co-Chair, and NASC Executive Council Member Rep. Patrick Brennan – CSF again worked with Rep. Brennan and our partners in the sportsmen’s community to further advance suppressor use in the Green Mountain State in 2016. Last year’s bill (H. 570) repealed the initial sunset provision for ownership that was contained in the 2015 bill that authorized their ownership. Now, in 2017, CSF is once again working with our partners and the Vermont Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus to advance H 31, a bill to authorize their use for hunting. At this time the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is presenting staunch opposition to the bill over poaching concerns that have been raised by their Wardens. In the coming months CSF will be working with our partners to host educational demonstrations for the Wardens to alleviate their concerns and aid in the bill’s passage. H 31 is currently sitting in the House Committee on Natural Resources, Fish, and Wildlife.

**Trophy Importation Bans**

In response to the Cecil the Lion controversy that quickly spanned the nation, several states introduced bills to ban the importation of “Big-5” trophies from Africa as a knee-jerk, emotional response. In all instances, CSF worked alongside our partners in the conservation community to educate members of the respective sportsmen’s caucuses on the realities of hunting in Africa and the many benefits it provides to local communities and on-the-ground conservation efforts. New Jersey passed bills banning the importation of “Big-5” trophies in 2016, which was quickly struck down by a U.S. District Court Judge for violating the Endangered Species Act. Despite this legal precedent trophy importation bills have once again been introduced in the following states:
**Connecticut (SB 942)**
Connecticut SB 942 was introduced on **March 1, 2017** by the Joint Committee on the Environment and was heard by the Committee on **March 6**. If passed into law the bill would prohibit the importation of the “big five” African species into the state. CSF submitted written testimony against the bill, detailing the legal precedent that was established in New Jersey last year. CSF also worked with the **Committee Chairman, Senator Craig Miner (Caucus Co-Chair and former NASC Executive Council Member)** to arm him with the relevant facts about the lawsuit in advance of the Committee hearing. At the time of this writing the results of the hearing are not known.

**New York (SB 120/AB 5116, SB 1883/AB 4010)**
New York presently has four bills (two sets of “same-as” bills) concerning trophy importation bans that are active at this time. SB 120/AB 5116 would prohibit the possession and transport of certain animals and body parts thereof at airports and port facilities owned or operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; includes the big five African species. In order for these bills to go into effect New Jersey would have to pass matching legislation for the two states to amend their Port Authority agreement. SB 1883/AB 4010 would apply more generally to the state and would enact “Cecil’s Law” which would ban the importation, transportation and possession of certain African wildlife species and products. As discussed above, there is legal precedent out of New Jersey last year which found that state-level bans on trophy importation are in violation of the Endangered Species Act. CSF will be working to educate the leaders and members of the New York Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus, alongside the New York Sportsmen’s Advisory Council on the outcome of that lawsuit to halt these bills from progressing further.

**Other Policy Issues by State**

**Alabama – Nonresident College Student Hunting License**
Under existing law, a nonresident student of an institution of higher education in Alabama is required to purchase a nonresident hunting or fishing license in order to hunt or fish with certain exceptions. HB 3 would authorize a nonresident student at an institution of higher education in this state to purchase resident hunting or fishing licenses under certain conditions. Sponsored by **Alabama Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus member Rep. Tommy Hanes**, the legislation unanimously passed the House on **February 23** and passed the Senate on **March 16**. It currently awaits **Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus member Governor Robert Bentley’s** signature. Similar bills were filed in the Senate Caucus members **Senator Tom Whatley** and **Senator Rusty Glover**.

**Arkansas – Dog Breeder Bill (HB 1715)**
The Leadership of the Arkansas Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus was interested in running a preemptive dog breeder bill in 2017 to get in front of several attempts by HSUS to impose unnecessarily strict regulations on dog breeders. CSF worked with AKC to provide draft legislation. However, the co-chairs assigned the bill to Representative Marcus Richmond, who owns American Pet Registry Incorporated, and who has been crossways with AKC in the past. The original draft was initially modified by Rep. Richmond to regulate based on having five intact females, along with several other problematic provisions. CSF tried to work with Richmond to amend the bill to also include a number of dogs sold threshold, along with other amendments to make the bill more acceptable. HB 1715 was introduced on **February 27**. Unfortunately, AKC still opposed, and the bill is not expected to pass. We will work with AKC and the caucus co-chairs to introduce a more acceptable bill in 2018 or 2019.
• **Colorado – Predator Management**
  In November 2016, the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission unanimously approved two predator management studies in spatially defined areas of the state to study the impacts of predation, particularly by black bears and mountain lions, on mule deer. Prior to the Commission’s vote, CSF organized a sportsmen’s group sign on letter expressing support for the studies with the understanding that animal rights advocates would be protesting the proposal vocally. Since approval by the Commission, CSF has been working with members of the Colorado Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus to educate other legislators about the scientific basis of the predator management studies. Additionally, the Caucus’s House Democratic Co-Chair, **Rep. Jeni Arndt**, has made it clear that any legislation intended to interfere with the Commission’s proposals will not pass through the House Natural Resources Committee while she serves as the Chair.

• **Connecticut – Ivory Ban (HB 6335)**
  On **January 23**, Connecticut House Bill 6335 was introduced to prohibit a person from purchasing, selling, offering for sale, possessing with the intent to sell, and importing with intent to sell ivory or rhinoceros horn. The bill was heard in the Joint Committee on Environment on March 6, and CSF submitted written testimony in opposition. At this time the results of the hearing have not yet been determined.

• **Delaware – Game Meat Donation Liability Exemption (HB 27)**
  On **January 10**, Delaware Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Co-Chair, **Rep. Jeff Spiegelman**, introduced House Bill 27 to protect those who donate game meat to the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Sportsmen Against Hunger program and non-profits from civil or criminal liability. The legislation is cosponsored by **Caucus Co-Chairs Representative William Carson and Senators Bruce Ennis and Brian Pettyjohn**.

• **Georgia – Outdoor Stewardship Act (HB 332)**
  The legislation would provide a dedicated funding mechanism for the conservation for priority lands, the stewardship of state parks and wildlife management areas, and the support of local parks and preserves by establishing the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Fund. The Trust Fund would be supported by 75% of all tax revenue collected annually from the sale of outdoor recreation equipment which would be dedicated for the purpose of the protection and preservation of conservation land. The effort has long been a conservation issue in the state and was recently favorably reported as substituted from the House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment on **March 3**.

• **Idaho – College Student Nonresident Discounted Hunting and Angling Licenses**
  Towards the end of 2016, CSF engaged in strategy discussions with Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and the Associated Student of the University of Idaho about legislation to potentially allow out-of-state students attending college in Idaho to purchase hunting and angling licenses and tags at discounted rates. CSF put together a policy forum in the topic in 2016 that allowed sportsmen’s groups and the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game to weigh in and provide their thoughts on the legislation. These conversations continued in the first two months of 2017, though legislative leadership noted that the bill would not receive a hearing in 2017 due to the fact that legislators wanted to focus on the Department’s fee legislation. However, legislative leaders have noted that they are open to hearing the next year, and CSF will continue to stay engaged with partners to discuss strategy moving forward.
• **Idaho – Fee Lock-Depredation-Sportsmen’s Access Legislation (HB 230)**
  For the past several years, CSF has been engaged in discussions with the Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game and in-state sportsmen’s partners on a strategy for passing the Department’s legislation to raise fees on most general licenses and tags, as the Department has not had a fee increase since 2005 and fees have not kept up with the rate of inflation. The price structure proposed by the Department has been to lock in prices for those who purchase licenses every year, meaning that someone who purchases a license in 2018 will be locked in at that price at least the following five years, assuming they purchase a license every year, while prices will go up for those who are infrequent license buyers. CSF and in-state partners have successfully worked to ensure that sportsmen’s priorities are reflected in any such legislation, and on **March 1**, a bill was introduced in the Idaho House of Representatives that would both institute the fee lock and price increase, while also adding a license surcharge that would increase the amount of revenue dedicated to sportsmen’s access programs and address depredation issues. The bill passed the House of Representatives on **March 7** and the Senate on **March 17**, with the Chairs of the **Idaho Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus** submitting a letter of support prior to the bill’s hearing in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee. The bill currently awaits signature from **GSC member Gov. Butch Otter**.

• **Nebraska – Mountain Lion Bill (LB 448)**
  Repeated efforts by Sen. Ernie Chambers to ban mountain lion hunting in Nebraska have been struck down in 2014 and 2016 largely through the efforts of **Sen. Curt Friesen and the other Nebraska Legislative Sportsmen’s Forum Members**. Supported by the Nebraska Sportsmen’s Foundation, the Nebraska Forum is again mobilizing to defeat Sen. Chamber’s latest attempt (NE LB 448) to ban mountain lion hunting in 2017.

• **Nevada – Wildlife Management Bill (AB 101)**
  Historically, a $3 tag fee paid by Nevada’s sportsmen has gone, in part, towards the lethal management of predatory species by NDOW in the state of Nevada. Introduced by Assemblyman Mike Sprinkle on **February 6**, AB 101 would no longer require those monies to be used for lethal predator control. The sportsmen’s community in Nevada has expressed strong opposition to the bill. CSF has been in close contact with the Coalition for Nevada’s Wildlife, and is continuing to monitor the bill’s progress.

• **North Carolina – Nantahala and Pisgah National Forests Management Plan Revision**
  With the support of CSF staff, the **North Carolina Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus** has submitted two letters to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in support of active habitat management. The USFS is revising the management plan for these two forests which comprise over half of North Carolina’s public hunting land, and correcting the lack of quality of wildlife habitat, specifically regenerating young forests, is a priority issue for the NCWRC and hunting conservation groups. **2017**. CSF staff is monitoring this issue closely and will likely submit additional comments on the plan revision in 2017.

• **Oregon – Hunting Mountain Lions with Hounds (HB 2107, HB 2589, SB 371, SB 458)**
  Oregon HB 2107, HB 2589, SB 371, introduced in **January** by Oregon Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus Members Representative Sherrie Sprenger and Senator Bill Hansell, respectively, would each provide that a county is exempt from the applicability of the state’s statute banning the use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars if voters approve a county measure proposed by initiative petition or referred to the people by the governing body of a county. Oregon S 458, introduced by **Caucus Member Senator Chuck Thomsen**, would require that the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopt a controlled hunt program for hunting mountain lions with dogs. The Oregon Sportsmen’s Caucus is
determining which of these proposals will be a Caucus priority bill for the 2017 session, and CSF continues to provide strategy and policy advice to assist with the passage of any such bill.

- **Oregon – Allowable Composition of Gasoline for Sale in Oregon (SB 19)**

  On **February 8**, a hearing was held in the Oregon Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee on SB 19, a bill that would update descriptions and allowed quantities of oxygenates in gasoline for sale at wholesale or retail in Oregon. Following the hearing, CSF assisted the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) in reaching out to members of the Oregon Senate, including **Oregon Sportsmen’s Caucus Members Senators Herman Baertschiger and Arnie Roblan**, to discuss amending the bill to create a carve-out for butanol to be used in marine applications, as isobutanol in particular has been proven safe and effective in both non-road and marine applications. The Committee noted to NMMA that they would make the carve out, and the draft of the amended bill is still in progress.

- **Pennsylvania – License Fee Setting Authority (SB 30, SB 192)**

  The Pennsylvania Game Commission and Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission have been repeatedly denied license fee increases by the state legislature for over a decade. Senate Bills 30 and 192 would grant authority to the Commissions to set their own license and permit fees and secure conservation funding for fish and wildlife management. On **January 31**, CSF’s Mid-Atlantic States Coordinator met with the Majority Chair of the Game and Fisheries Committee, Senator Pat Stefano, to express support for the bills. The bills have unanimously passed the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee and were re-referred to the Senate Committee on Appropriations on **February 6**.

- **Tennessee – Revenue Reimbursement to Wildlife Resources Agencies (H 468)**

  Caucus Co-Chair Representative Jay Reedy introduced legislation that would relates to hunting and fishing licenses and would allow the wildlife resources agency to be reimbursed for lost revenue resulting from the issuance of free or partially discounted combination hunting and fishing licenses to persons on or after a specified date. The legislation would not be retroactive but would require future licensing carve outs to receive a fiscal note and to use the General Fund for any resulting reimbursements.

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**CSF Events**

**SHOT Show Reception**
In coordination with the annual SHOT Show in Las Vegas, NV, CSF hosted a reception on January 18 to gather partners and supporters from the shooting sports industry to discuss priorities for hunting and recreational shooting in 2017.

**Changing of the Guard Dinner**
On January 30, CSF hosted the ‘Changing of the Guard’ dinner in Washington, DC, to announce CSC leadership for the new Congress and discuss sportsmen’s policy priorities, including a comprehensive sportsmen’s package.
Welcome to Congress Reception
On February 7, CSF hosted the annual ‘Welcome to Congress’ Reception on Capitol Hill to welcome new and returning Members of Congress and discuss policy priorities for the 115th Congress, led by CSC leaders and Members.

Governors Sportsmen’s Caucus Winter Reception
On Saturday, February 25, CSF hosted the annual GSC Winter Reception in Washington, DC, during the annual National Governors Association meeting. The theme of this year’s reception was “The American System of Conservation Funding: 80 Years of Success,” to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the ASCF.

Illinois Wild Game Dinner
On March 15, CSF joined the Illinois Legislative Sportsmen’s Caucus in hosting the annual Illinois Regional Sportsmen’s Caucus Dinner in Springfield. The event gathered state legislators and members of the sportsmen’s community to discuss sportsmen’s policy priorities within the state and across the Midwestern region.