

*** Archery Trade Association *** Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies *** Backcountry Hunters & Anglers *** Black Brant Group *** Boone and Crockett Club *** California Deer Association *** California Waterfowl Association *** California Wild Sheep Foundation *** Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation *** Conservation Force *** Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports *** Dallas Safari Club *** Houston Safari Club *** National Deer Association *** National Shooting Sports Foundation *** Orion: The Hunter's Institute *** Pope & Young Club *** Professional Outfitters and Guides of America *** Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation *** Safari Club International *** Sportsmen's Alliance *** Suisun Resource Conservation District *** Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership *** Tulare Basin Wetlands Association *** Whitetails Unlimited *** Wild Sheep Foundation *** Wildlife Forever ***

May 17, 2024

Sen. Joe Manchin, Chair
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Sen. John Barrasso, Ranking Member
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

We write to thank you for holding a hearing on the Mojave National Preserve Boundary Adjustment Act (S. 4222), legislation that would restore hunting access to the more than 20,000 acres of public lands within the Castle Mountains National Monument. Our organizations collectively represent millions of Americans who care deeply about wildlife conservation, public lands, and public access. We now ask you to consider S. 4222 in a committee business meeting so that it may be reported to the full Senate, where we further urge its passage.

The Castle Mountains are a special place that support habitat for quail, chukar, rabbit, mule deer, and a growing 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. This access allows sportsmen and women to actively participate in something they value: the conservation and management of game species and their habitats, creating more advocates for the health of these lands.

S. 4222 would transfer the lands within the current Castle Mountains National Monument boundaries into the adjacent Mojave National Preserve, expanding the Preserve and reinstating hunting access to these lands, while maintaining the existing protections for the Castle Mountains under NPS management. This proposal is the culmination of years of effort and collaboration by local stakeholders and will ensure the future of this irreplaceable landscape. 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, this legislation would facilitate guidance from the Department of the Interior to consolidate management plans on connected parcels of public lands to provide greater certainty 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 and we look forward to resolving this important issue through your leadership. We respectfully ask that you advance this legislation.

CC:

Honorable U.S. Senator Alex Padilla

Honorable U.S. Senator Laphonza Butler

Honorable U.S. Representative Jay Obernolte

Sincerely,

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