

SENATE BILL NO. 82—COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

JANUARY 31, 2013

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

SUMMARY—Urges the Board of Wildlife Commissioners to review the hunting of black bears. (BDR S-409)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.  
Effect on the State: No.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to wildlife; urging the Board of Wildlife Commissioners to thoroughly and scientifically review the hunting of black bears; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

**Legislative Counsel’s Digest:**

1 Existing law: (1) requires the Board of Wildlife Commissioners to adopt  
2 regulations establishing seasons for hunting game mammals and the manner and  
3 means of taking wildlife; and (2) authorizes the Commission to adopt regulations  
4 setting forth the species of wildlife which may be hunted or trapped without a  
5 license or permit. (NRS 501.181, 502.010) **Section 11.7** of this bill urges the  
6 Commission to thoroughly and scientifically review the hunting of black bears.

1 WHEREAS, Wildlife belongs to the people of the State of Nevada  
2 under NRS 501.100, and black bears are considered a big game  
3 mammal pursuant to NAC 502.020; and

4 WHEREAS, Pursuant to NRS 501.102, the Nevada Legislature  
5 has declared that hunting is a valuable activity in the management of  
6 game mammals and game birds, results in financial support for  
7 conservation programs that benefit many species, including  
8 nongame wildlife, is an excellent source of food, recreational  
9 opportunities and employment, contributes significantly to the  
10 economy of this State and the quality of life of its citizens, and  
11 provides a beneficial use for firearms, archery equipment and other  
12 legal weapons used to take game mammals and game birds,  
13 following the pioneer spirit of Nevada; and



\* S B 8 2 R 1 \*

1 WHEREAS, As set forth in NRS 501.100, the preservation,  
2 protection, management and restoration of wildlife within this State  
3 contribute immeasurably to the aesthetic, recreational and economic  
4 aspects of the natural resources belonging to the people of the State  
5 of Nevada; and

6 WHEREAS, Outdoor recreation is a major feature of life in  
7 Nevada, and the majority of the State of Nevada is in public  
8 ownership through the Federal Government, which manages over 60  
9 million acres, or about 86 percent of the total land area of the State  
10 of Nevada; and

11 WHEREAS, In February 2011, the Board of Wildlife  
12 Commissioners approved the first black bear hunt in Nevada  
13 history; and

14 WHEREAS, As part of this approval, the Board adopted and the  
15 Nevada Legislature approved temporary regulations setting forth  
16 parameters under which the black bear hunt would operate,  
17 including a bear hunting season beginning on the third Saturday of  
18 August 2011 and ending on the last Saturday of December 2011 or  
19 until the harvest quota was achieved; and

20 WHEREAS, Before the 2012 bear hunting season, the Board of  
21 Wildlife Commissioners, with the Nevada Legislature approving,  
22 amended the administrative regulations to close bear hunting in  
23 portions of the Lake Tahoe Basin and the Carson Range, leaving  
24 bear hunting open in other areas of western Nevada; and

25 WHEREAS, A total of 1,156 applications for bear hunting tags  
26 were received by the Department of Wildlife for the 2011 bear  
27 hunting season and 1,762 applications were received for the 2012  
28 bear hunting season, with 45 tags issued each year; and

29 WHEREAS, The 2011 black bear hunt resulted in the taking of 14  
30 bears, and the 2012 bear hunt resulted in the harvest of 11 bears; and

31 WHEREAS, Proponents and opponents of the black bear hunt  
32 have continuously registered their opinions relating to the bear hunt  
33 to the Department of Wildlife, the Board of Wildlife Commissioners  
34 and Nevada lawmakers; and

35 WHEREAS, Some Native American tribes in Nevada have  
36 expressed concerns regarding potential interference with certain  
37 traditional ceremonies and activities, such as the annual pine nut  
38 harvest in black bear habitats in the Pine Nut and Sweetwater  
39 Mountains and the Wassuk Range, because the bear hunt takes place  
40 at the same time, and in the same places, as these traditional  
41 ceremonies and activities; and

42 WHEREAS, Opponents of the bear hunt in Nevada have declared  
43 that the black bear hunt is not scientifically sustainable and conflicts  
44 with nonlethal priorities of bear management and conservation, the  
45 interests and concerns of the majority of Nevadans, including



1 Nevada Native American tribes, and the various nonconsumptive  
2 forms of outdoor recreation, including hiking and camping; and

3 WHEREAS, Proponents of the black bear hunt have stated that  
4 the bear hunt is scientifically sound and part of a viable and proven  
5 wildlife management approach, that hunting is the preferred means  
6 by which to manage wildlife and that a vast majority of Nevada  
7 sportsmen and sportswomen support bear hunting if it is done  
8 properly and ethically; and

9 WHEREAS, Scientists from the Department of Wildlife and  
10 scientists representing opponents of the bear hunt have arrived at  
11 different conclusions relating to Nevada's black bear population, the  
12 scope and range of black bear habitat in Nevada and the genetic  
13 diversity of black bears; and

14 WHEREAS, The Board of Wildlife Commissioners has made a  
15 public commitment to review the black bear hunt following its third  
16 season and the Department of Wildlife's Black Bear Management  
17 Plan for 2012 further commits to a 3-year scientific analysis of the  
18 black bear hunt, including a review of black bear survival, mortality  
19 rates and population trends, with the goal of achieving and  
20 maintaining healthy and productive black bear populations; now,  
21 therefore,  
22

23 THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN  
24 SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:  
25

26 **Section 1.** (Deleted by amendment.)

27 **Sec. 2.** (Deleted by amendment.)

28 **Sec. 3.** (Deleted by amendment.)

29 **Sec. 4.** (Deleted by amendment.)

30 **Sec. 5.** (Deleted by amendment.)

31 **Sec. 6.** (Deleted by amendment.)

32 **Sec. 7.** (Deleted by amendment.)

33 **Sec. 8.** (Deleted by amendment.)

34 **Sec. 9.** (Deleted by amendment.)

35 **Sec. 10.** (Deleted by amendment.)

36 **Sec. 11.** (Deleted by amendment.)

37 **Sec. 11.3.** The Legislature hereby acknowledges the various  
38 perspectives on the hunting of black bears in Nevada.

39 **Sec. 11.5.** The Legislature hereby finds and declares that any  
40 hunting of black bears in Nevada should be predicated on sound  
41 scientific data that ensures a healthy, productive and viable black  
42 bear population and reduces the number of conflicts between bears  
43 and humans.



1       **Sec. 11.7.** The Nevada Legislature urges:

2       1. The proponents and opponents of the black bear hunt in  
3 Nevada to engage in productive and meaningful discussions with the  
4 goal of achieving a consensus on the proper management of  
5 Nevada's black bear population and which recognize and protect the  
6 rights of sportsmen and sportswomen, Native American tribes,  
7 conservationists and outdoor recreation enthusiasts in this State;

8       2. The continued management of black bears in Nevada by the  
9 Department of Wildlife in a way that conserves, sustains and  
10 protects the black bear population in a healthy and productive  
11 condition and minimizes threats to public safety and damage to  
12 personal property;

13       3. The Board of Wildlife Commissioners to thoroughly  
14 conduct its 3-year scientific review of the black bear hunt following  
15 the 2013 bear hunting season, with the goal of evaluating the overall  
16 impacts of three consecutive bear hunts and making an unbiased and  
17 informed recommendation concerning the viability of hunting black  
18 bears in Nevada; and

19       4. The Board of Wildlife Commissioners to submit this review  
20 to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for distribution to  
21 the Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and the  
22 Chair of the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources,  
23 Agriculture, and Mining.

24       **Sec. 12.** This act becomes effective upon passage and  
25 approval.

