

Dear (Premier, Honorable Minister, MLA),

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen, conservationist and resident hunter.

Once again there is a concerted attack in place against hunting, specifically, the hunting of 'large carnivores' in British Columbia (B.C.). The species that have been highlighted are black bears, cougars and wolves. Outside the 'large carnivore' designation, bighorn sheep and elk were also included in recent articles. All of the species mentioned in the articles and documents submitted to government are suggested to be 'trophy hunted'. However, black bears, cougars, bighorn sheep and elk are highly sought-after sources of protein and are not currently in danger of population declines by regulated hunting.

Also mentioned in recent attack articles are the wolf management and caribou enhancement programs. Both programs are proven science based approaches that have had immediate positive impacts on caribou populations. The success of these programs is summarized in this short article: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/caribou-wolf-cull-1.4915683>

The use of misinformation and 'social licence' decision making were the same tactics used in 2017 that lead to the grizzly bear hunt closure in B.C. The loss of the grizzly bear hunt was due to social pressure, instead of scientific reasons. Minister Doug Donaldson said on the topic, "It is no longer socially acceptable to the vast majority of British Columbians to hunt grizzly bears". However, the opinion of the "vast majority of British Columbians" proved to be 78% of only 4200 poll respondents, or less than 3300 British Columbians.

I am against wildlife being used as a political pawn and I am firmly in support of science and evidence based management of wildlife and their habitats.

B.C. has approximately 105,000 resident hunters. There are between 120,000 and 160,000 black bears in B.C. with a harvest rate of approximately 3% (3,600 to 4,800). Putting it into perspective, in 1980, it was estimated that there were 35,000 to 90,000 black bears in B.C. and a targeted harvest rate of about 4,000 animals. The recent articles in this attack on sustainable, science based and regulated hunting try to make the argument that black bear hunting isn't socially acceptable because "2% of hunters polled, identify as bear hunters" which simply isn't the truth based on the numbers noted above.

Ungulate populations have dropped to abnormally low levels in some parts of the province and predator populations have exploded across the province as a whole. The government has taken proactive action to prevent further loss to ungulate species by allowing regulated hunting of predators. Predator (or 'large carnivore') hunting has been relied upon for generations to manage wildlife populations and generate revenue for wildlife conservation. Once again emotionally driven campaigns are attempting to interfere, risking the loss of our social license to continue to hunt in B.C.

Furthermore, if the attack on predator hunting is successful, Guide Outfitters, taxidermists, meat processors and countless other communities will again face catastrophic loss as with the grizzly bear hunt closure. It is unacceptable for the government to rely on unformed public opinion polls and emotionally driven campaigns when making wildlife management decisions. When B.C. businesses are already suffering as a result of the pandemic, I expect the government to use science and evidence based approaches when making decisions impacting wildlife management in B.C.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this. I look forward to your response and support of my concerns.

Yours In Conservation,

(Your name here)

(Your email & Postal code here)