

Date of Hearing: April 8, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON WATER, PARKS, AND WILDLIFE

Diane Papan, Chair

AB 1169 (Jeff Gonzalez) – As Introduced February 21, 2025

SUBJECT: Wildlife grants: Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement program

SUMMARY: Make changes to the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement Program (SHARE). Specifically, **this bill**:

- 1) Requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to make grants to, or enter into agreements with, nonprofit conservation organizations, government entities, or other entities, when CDFW finds that those grants or agreements are necessary for the purposes of the SHARE program.
- 2) Removes the price caps on the financial compensation given to landowners participating in the SHARE program (i.e., \$30 per acre or \$50 per participant per day).
- 3) Makes other technical changes.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes the SHARE program (Fish and Game Code §§ 1570 *et seq.*).

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown. This bill is keyed fiscal.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose of this bill.** This bill (1) requires CDFW to make grants and agreements when it determines those grants and agreements are necessary and (2) removes the cap on financial compensation for landowners. According to the author, “[This bill] seeks to expand California’s SHARE program, which currently offers outdoor recreation opportunities in only a limited number of counties, making it difficult for many outdoor enthusiasts to participate. By broadening access, this bill aligns with Governor Newsom’s 30x30 initiative, which aims to ensure all Californians have opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Expanding the SHARE program will enhance recreational access, foster conservation efforts, and promote partnerships with private landowners to support biodiversity and sustainable outdoor experiences across the state.”
- 2) **Background.** The SHARE program was established in the Fish and Game Code in 2003. It allows landowners (e.g., private landowners, non-profits, or government agencies) to make their lands available to the public for hunting, fishing, or recreational activities in exchange for economic incentives and liability protection, under specified conditions. Access permits are awarded by random draw through CDFW’s online license service. With over half of California’s acreage being privately owned, the goal of SHARE is to provide public access to private or otherwise landlocked public land through collaborative partnerships with landowners. A landowner may have interest in participating in the SHARE program because of the financial incentive, as a method to relieve wildlife damage on their property, or simply to expand available recreation area. The SHARE program also provides liability coverage to the landowner.

According to CDFW's website, there are 42 properties that offer hunts through the SHARE program. Of these, 26 allow elk hunting, 12 allow deer hunting, ten allow quail hunting, eight allow dove hunting, five allow pig hunting, five allow turkey hunting, four allow bear hunting, two allow waterfowl hunting, and one allows pheasant hunting (note, that some properties allow for hunting of several different species). The SHARE program properties are found in 15 counties, with the most being found in Humboldt County. There had been one fishing opportunity available, which is currently closed.

This bill removes the cap on financial compensation given to landowners for their participation in the SHARE program. These prices were established in 2003 and have not been updated since. If these prices had reflected inflation over the last 20 years, landowners would be reimbursed \$52 per acre or \$87 per participant per day.

- 3) **Arguments in support.** A coalition of primarily hunting organizations writes in support of this bill. They laud the goals of the SHARE program, but note that the opportunities are limited to only some of California's counties. They believe this bill will expand the SHARE program by removing restrictions on outdated compensation and further requiring CDFW to partner with nonprofit organizations, which they claim CDFW is not doing in a significant way.
- 4) **Related legislation.** AB 1423 (Berryhill), Chapter 394, Statutes of 2009, allows the SHARE program to be initiated without the Fish and Game Commission verifying sufficient public interest, expands the properties that may be used for the SHARE program, and authorizes an additional compensation option to landowners of \$50 per public participant per day.

AB 396 (Harman), Chapter 394, Statutes of 2003, established the SHARE program at CDFW.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Waterfowl Association (Sponsor)
 Black Brant Group, the
 California Bowman Hunters
 California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation
 California Deer Association
 California Houndsmen for Conservation
 California Rice Commission
 California State Chapter - National Wild Turkey Federation
 Delta Waterfowl
 Ducks Unlimited
 Howl for Wildlife
 Northern California Water Association
 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
 Sacramento Safari Club
 Safari Club International
 San Diego County Wildlife Federation
 San Francisco Bay Area Chapter - Safari Club International
 Tulare Basin Wetlands Association

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Stephanie Mitchell / W., P., & W. / (916) 319-2096