

March 28, 2023

Washington Senate Law & Justice Committee
416 Sid Snyder Ave, SW
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: House Bill 1143 & Padden Amendment 2624.1

To the Honorable Members of the Senate Law & Justice Committee,

The below signed conservation organizations would like to share our concerns with House Bill 1143 (HB 1143) and encourage adoption of Padden Amendment 2624.1. HB 1143 in its current form would require a 10-day waiting period on firearm purchases and impose training requirements on Washington's law-abiding hunters and recreational shooters. Ducks Unlimited Inc., Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and other listed organizations represent the interests of hundreds of thousands of youth and families that believe in safe gun ownership and enjoy the tradition of hunting with firearms in Washington.

Washington's hunters and recreational shooters have been the primary funders of state level conservation for more than 85 years. Through the American System of Conservation Funding, hunting license fees go directly back into conservation by the State to protect lands, waters, and habitats important to Washington's wildlife. Also, the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937 dedicated an excise tax on firearms and ammunition that contributes millions of dollars each year directly into state conservation efforts. Washington hunters and recreational shooters are proud to contribute to these funds when purchasing our firearms and licenses. Unfortunately, the redundant and onerous training requirements of HB 1143 will result in fewer new hunters and recreational shooters enjoying this outdoor sport and a loss of important revenue for conservation.

HB 1143 ignores the fact that Washington's hunters already partake in the excellent gun safety training offered by the state through the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife at <https://www.hunter-ed.com/washington/>. This thorough training, which youth and new hunters take to obtain their hunting licenses, includes hunting ethics and the safe handling of firearms. Duplicative training requirements and increased costs all create additional barriers to entry for hunting in Washington, thereby also diminishing the positive impact that hunting has on Washington's natural habitats and the fish and wildlife they support. Adoption of the Padden Amendment 2624.1 would avoid these duplicative requirements while still meeting the training goals intended by HB 1143.

Surely, the intent of the HB 1143 is not to end the lawful act of hunting in Washington enjoyed by our diverse communities and passed along through generations of families dedicated to conservation, but to promote safe gun ownership. We share the interests of promoting safe firearm ownership and we hope you will work closely with our community to find positive opportunities to do so without diminishing the recruitment and retention of hunters and recreational shooters in Washington that are vital for the future of conservation funding in our state.

Sincerely,

Joe Kondelis
American Bear Foundation

Keely Hopkins
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Matt Little
Ducks Unlimited

Charles Whitwam
HOWL for Wildlife

Marie Neumiller
Inland Northwest Wildlife Council

Alex Baier
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Torin Miller
National Deer Association

Russ McDonald
National Wild Turkey Federation

Dale Magart
Northeast Washington Wildlife Group

Chris Tymeson
Safari Club International