



# HUNTER ADVOCACY

Second Quarter FY2026  
October - December



**SCI Government  
Affairs in Action**

State & Local

Federal

International

Legal

Guides & Outfitters

Hunter Information Service



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*AN INTRODUCTION FROM VP OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS CHRIS TYMESON*

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At Safari Club International, our mission to protect the freedom to hunt and promote wildlife conservation is not just a tagline—it is a daily, deliberate commitment that demands vigilance, strategy, and action. Nowhere is this more evident than in our advocacy efforts.

Every regulation, every bill, every courtroom decision that impacts hunting rights or wildlife management is a line in the story we are writing together. Whether we are pushing back on unjust trophy import bans, defending sustainable use at national and international conventions, or challenging misguided proposals that would restrict access to public lands, our advocacy team is on the front lines.

This quarterly report provides a snapshot of that work, what we have accomplished, what challenges remain, and where we are headed. Behind each policy win or legislative push is a team of professionals working with lawmakers, agency leaders, international allies, and fellow conservation organizations to defend science-based wildlife management and your right to hunt.

But advocacy is not just about what happens in Washington or in courtrooms. It is also about engagement from SCI members, chapters, and volunteers who write, call, and show up. You amplify our voice and turn our policy positions into political action.

SCI experienced an unprecedented level of success this quarter. We reinforced our partnership with leaders in the DOI with meetings and regular communications. We sustained relationships with our Congressional champions and their staff, leading to the largest attendance at a lunch-and-learn program and the opportunity to testify before a House Subcommittee. We garnered two victories in court keeping hunting open for our members on the East Coast. And we emerged from the 20th meeting of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species with a win on bontebok and no significant losses. I am proud of this team—the best in the business—and pleased to report on all these positives during the holiday season.

In the fight for our hunting heritage,



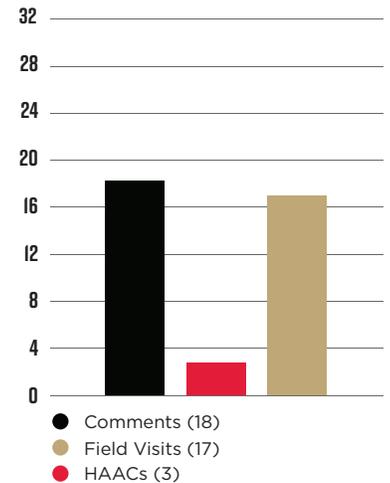
Chris Tymeson, J.D.  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
Safari Club International

## STATE & LOCAL



### WINS

- Wisconsin Priorities Move Forward.** Two longstanding priorities in the Badger State continue to move forward within the legislature: reauthorizing the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, which supports Wisconsin's public lands, and establishing a sandhill crane hunting season. Throughout the last quarter (and year) SCI has consistently engaged on these issues through in-state coalitions, formal written testimony, legal analysis/testimony, grassroots advocacy, and social media. The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program will expire in 2026 without legislative reauthorization. SCI, along with our partners, have asked elected officials to allow the program to continue. An Assembly bill doing this has come out of Committee and awaits further action on the floor. The sandhill crane legislation received a Senate hearing in late November, and we expect a committee vote on the measure soon. The Assembly committee will hear the bill during the first week of January.
- New Jersey Council Bill Thwarted.** SCI, the SCI Garden State Chapter, and our partners responded quickly to a blatant anti-hunting effort to restructure the New Jersey Fish and Game Council. The bill would have significantly altered the make-up of the Council by replacing three of the six nominees from New Jersey sportsmen's clubs with individuals representing "animal welfare" organizations. The swift grassroots opposition has reportedly killed the bill for now.
- Licensing Bills Move Ahead in Michigan.** The Michigan Senate advanced a proposed license fee restructuring package introduced by SCI members and conservation champions Senator Jon Bumstead and Senator John Cherry. These bills would allow the first updates to licensing costs since 2014, ensuring adequate funding for the Michigan wildlife agency's full slate of responsibilities. The bills now await further action in the Michigan House of Representatives.



### LOSSES

- Nevada Hunting Tournaments.** The Nevada Wildlife Commission voted to adopt new regulations for coyote contests. Despite SCI's unsuccessful opposition to these increased regulations, we did successfully prevent an outright ban on these tournaments.



### THREATS

- Oregon Ballot Initiative 28 to End All Hunting.** If passed, Initiative Petition 28 would ban all hunting and fishing in Oregon, and any other activity (including farming, research, and more) that intentionally injures, kills, or breeds an animal. The proponents have now gained over 87,000 signatures out of the required 117,000 to place the initiative on the 2026 ballot. It is now expected that the petition will qualify and be voted on next year.
- Catalina Island Deer Eradication Risk Continues.** The Catalina Island Conservancy has once again filed for a permit with the California state wildlife agency to eradicate deer, this time using paid sharpshooters. The state agency has not yet acted on the permit, and SCI and its Chapters continue to work in vigorous opposition.
- Massachusetts Restrictions Looming.** Legislators in the Bay State are proposing restrictions on traditional lead ammunition as well as a measure that would place additional excise taxes on the retail sale of firearms and ammunition.

## FEDERAL



### WINS

1. **A Huge Step Forward for Wolf Management.** H.R. 845, the Pet and Livestock Protection Act of 2025, passed the House in a bipartisan vote. This bill, a top priority for SCI's 2025 Lobby Day, would reinstate a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rule to delist gray wolves in the lower 48 states. The bill must now be introduced in and pass the Senate before going to the President's desk.
2. **Possible ESA Reform for the First Time in Decades.** House Natural Resources Committee Chair Bruce Westerman's comprehensive Endangered Species Act reform bill, the *ESA Amendments Act of 2025*, passed through the House Natural Resources Committee with a slightly bipartisan vote. SCI has coordinated closely with the Chair's team to develop the bill and will continue to work to see it pass the House.
3. **Forest Management Bill Advances.** The *Fix Our Forests Act*, having already passed the House, advanced through the Senate Committee on Agriculture in a bipartisan vote. This bill would help remove burdensome red tape slowing down habitat improvement projects and promote common-sense management practices that will lead to healthy, sustainable forest habitat.
4. **Continued Partnership with DOI Leadership.** SCI staff, led by CEO Laird Hamberlin, met with Department of Interior officials including Acting Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks Kevin Lilly and USFWS Director Brian Nesvik on important issues for SCI members, including gray wolves, grizzly bears, the Endangered Species Act and the 20th Conference of the Parties for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). SCI appreciates our partnership with the DOI for the benefit of hunting, wildlife, and sustainable-use conservation.



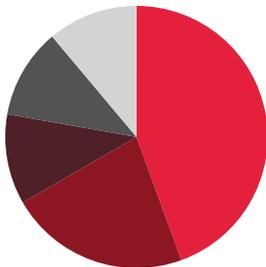
### LOSSES

1. **Government Shutdown Ends with a Stopgap Bill.** While the end of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history allowed for critical services to receive funding, the end result of a continuing resolution leaves open the possibility of another shutdown after funding ends on January 30, 2026. SCI's priority is to see the House version of the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill pass. This bill contains major SCI priorities such as protecting lead ammunition and adopting species-specific delisting rules. The continuing resolution that ended the shutdown only funds the government through Jan. 30<sup>th</sup>, and a new deal will need to be negotiated.



### THREATS

1. **Public Land Sales.** Senator Mike Lee continues to push for the disposition of federal lands. He recently introduced an amendment to the Senate version of the Interior-Environment Appropriations bill that would strike an existing provision, requiring the DOI to maintain all federal lands in national parks as federal lands and to continue to operate them as such. Senator Lee has since withdrawn the amendment after pushback from the outdoor community, but we will need to continue to monitor similar efforts.



**Hunters' Embassy™ Events**  
27 Different Members of Congress Attended These Events

- Fundraisers (4)
- Lunch & Learns (2)
- Hunt Club Roundtable (1)
- Reception (1)
- Political Briefing (1)

## INTERNATIONAL



### WINS

- 1. Successful CITES CoP20.** The 20th Conference of the Parties (CoP20) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) adopted several decisions that recognize successful sustainable-use conservation programs, including removing bontebok from the CITES Appendices of at-risk species. SCI's voting guide was well-received, and the CITES Parties did not adopt any decisions that will have material impact on hunters.
- 2. Progress in the European Parliament.** For the first time in more than a decade, the European Parliament declined to recommend trophy import bans in advance of CITES CoP20. SCI is pleased that advocacy and education efforts in partnership with the European Federation of Hunters (FACE) are paying off on the continent.
- 3. Promoting Biodiversity in Africa.** SCI participated in the first Africa Biodiversity Summit in Botswana. SCI's participation continued its collaboration with the Southern African Development Community. Also, SCI's Africa Liaison met with the Africa Group of Negotiators during the Summit to coordinate regarding CITES CoP20.
- 4. Updated Quotas in South Africa.** SCI worked with South Africa's government and partner organizations to implement a process for establishing elephant, leopard, and black rhino hunting quotas for 2026 and 2027. Quotas for these species were not established in 2024 and 2025 under the previous Environment Minister.
- 5. CWCP Leading the Fight in Canada.** The Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners, co-founded by SCI, now has over 20 partners and affiliates and has filed several comment letters in its first few months since establishment.



### LOSSES

- 1. CITES Decisions a Mixed Bag.** Despite successes at CoP20, the Parties rejected proposals to remove southern giraffe from CITES and to downlist peregrine falcon. The Parties also took other pro-restriction positions, despite the overwhelming evidence in support of sustainable use.
- 2. Court Upholds Trophy Restrictions.** The Belgium Constitutional Court ruled against SCI's Benelux Chapter in its challenge to Belgium's trophy import ban. For now, the import ban remains; the Chapter and its partners are deciding whether to take additional action.



### THREATS

- 1. Trophy Import Bans Loom.** Country-wide trophy import bans remain under consideration in various legislatures around the world, including in the United Kingdom.
- 2. Firearm Policies in Canada.** Gun control policies in Canada continue to threaten firearm ownership and use.
- 3. Anti-Hunting Groups Remain Ready.** Around the world, anti-hunting policies continue to wear away at successful conservation programs, especially those that support community livelihoods.

# LEGAL



## WINS

- 1. Protecting Florida's First Bear Hunt in 10 Years.** SCI's efforts helped protect Florida's first black bear hunt in a decade. After an animal rights group sued to enjoin the hunt, SCI successfully intervened to defend the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission's science-based decision. A Florida state court rejected the plaintiff's legal arguments to block the hunt. The judge ruled that the plaintiff failed to meet the high standard for a temporary injunction, in large part due to SCI's arguments. The decision underscores the hunt's role in helping to manage Florida's growing bear population and reducing human-bear conflicts. While this is a significant victory, the fight is not over—SCI is waiting on the court's decision on a motion to dismiss.
- 2. Defending Against Broad Hunting Restrictions on Private Property.** SCI's attorneys read about an energy company's attempt to stop private property owners from hunting on their own land in Maryland and sprang into action, filing a brief explaining the importance of hunting for wildlife management, conservation funding, and cultural heritage. A federal district court considered SCI's brief and arguments from the energy company and property owners and concluded that hunting could be limited while surveys are actively taking place, but the energy company cannot broadly prohibit hunting. The result is a targeted resolution where property owners and the energy company coordinate the surveys and hunting access. While not perfect, SCI appreciates the court's acknowledgement that hunting is a right that private property owners not only enjoy, but rely upon to manage the wildlife on their land.
- 3. Supporting the State of Alaska in the U.S. Supreme Court.** SCI filed a brief supporting the State of Alaska's petition for Supreme Court review in a case that challenges the State's authority to manage fish and wildlife. SCI's brief defends state authority and explains how the Circuit Court's decision upsets the balance of federal-state relations and allows a federal board to shut down hunting and fishing opportunities without sufficient justification.
- 4. Protecting Hunting Access on Federal Public Lands.** SCI filed a comment supporting the Bureau of Land Management's proposed rescission of a rule finalized last year that potentially reduced hunting access on millions of acres of BLM lands. SCI's comment points out that the rule conflicts with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act's multiple-use mandate, lacks clarity on how conservation leases would work, and risks restricting hunting access. The rule also fails to account for hunting's significant economic impact. SCI urged the BLM to guarantee hunting access while promoting balanced conservation in future policies and offered to work with the BLM to develop a policy that achieves this goal.
- 5. SCI Testifies on Targeted Revisions to the Equal Access to Justice Act.** SCI testified in the House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations regarding misuse of the Equal Access to Justice Act by certain well-funded environmental organizations. Despite having net assets in the tens or hundreds of millions of dollars, these organizations receive taxpayer dollars to sue federal agencies in unnecessary lawsuits. SCI's testimony focused on specific examples of groups improperly receiving EAJA funds and targeted reforms that would maintain EAJA for deserving individuals but reduce its abuse by these groups.



## LOSSES

- 1. Service and States Join SCI's Appeal in Gray Wolves Case.** In early August, a judge in the Montana federal district court ruled against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in a case seeking to relist wolves in the Western United States under the Endangered Species Act. SCI, Sportsmen's Alliance Foundation, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation immediately appealed the court's erroneous decision. The Service and the States of Montana and Utah joined SCI and our partner organizations by also appealing the district court's decision. Briefing in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals is scheduled to begin in late February.

## GUIDES & OUTFITTERS



### WINS

1. **New Zealand Continues the Fight for HOSI.** The Prime Minister and Minister of Hunting announced during the Sika Show the designation of two Herds of Special Interest (HOSI). All big game species in New Zealand are introduced, and current official policy is eradication. Creating these new HOSI will offer special protection and management interventions to keep tahr, chamois, elk, red deer, and others at sustainable levels.
2. **African AGMs Show Strong Support for SCI.** Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, and South Africa hosted several Annual General Meetings, and SCI was represented at each. Professional hunting associations received a Life Membership to auction, netting an average of \$2,000. Attendance at these annual meetings is crucial to hear directly from outfitter membership on issues they struggle with daily.
3. **Cinegetica Offers Outfitters Options.** There is a growing interest in the new partnership between Cinegetica and SCI. The success of SCI's convention continues to underscore our commitment to excellence in the hunting world and ability to deliver quality experiences to members.
4. **Coahuila State of Mexico Stands Up for Outfitter and Ranch Hunting Association.** Seventeen members are working directly with the state government to develop hunting tourism in Coahuila, Mexico. The governor requested this new association and is eager to see an expansion. He will be attending the 2026 Convention.



### THREATS

1. **U.S. Visa Issues.** Several African countries face increased scrutiny with bond requirements to secure visas and temporary restrictions on the issuance of visas being implemented. This directly affects SCI exhibitors and attendees at the national and chapter level. SCI continues to work with the U.S. State Department to secure visas and extend expiration dates to include our shows. This is fluid situation that can change quickly.

## HUNTER INFORMATION SERVICE

# 384

### MEMBER REQUESTS

- 44 Argentina Trophy Seizure Crisis (list of affected members now 130)
- 55 Trophy Issues
- 29 Hunting Travel (Firearms, Insurance, Airlines, Visas, Travel Warnings)
- 76 Outfitter Disputes/Complaints
- 56 Requests for Vetting and Researching Outfitters
- 53 Women Go Hunting Program and Events



### WINS

1. **Successful Recovery of Unjustly Seized Property.** Empowered a new member to get USFWS to drop unjustified federal charges and return seized rhino skin boots.
2. **Resolved 5-Year-Old Trophy Shipment Delays.** Through HIS efforts, an alligator trophy was finally shipped to the member-hunter in Lithuania, and an elephant trophy from Zimbabwe received permits to ship.
3. **Women Go Hunting Goes Full Steam Ahead.** The Women Go Hunting Initiative hosted 14 women at the Legends Ranch for a "Learn to Hunt" program that saw all participants harvest deer. Women Go Hunting has now delivered its third monthly newsletter with a sustained open rate of over 50%. The associated Facebook group has reached over 565 members. And the Women Go Hunting Record Book Awards Challenge includes 139 entries from 43 participants.