SCI
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HUNTER ADVOCACY

Fiscal 4th Quarter Advocacy Report



FIELD NOTES
April - June, 2025

SCI IN ACTION
In Courts
On Capitol Hill
In State Capitals
Around the World

HUNTER ADVOCACY

Fiscal 4th Quarter Advocacy Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2 An Introduction from CEO W. Laird Hamberlin

3 Fiscal 4th Quarter Advocacy Report Summary

4 SCI Mission

5 Legal Victories

6 Federal Victories

7 State Victories

8 International Victories

8 Protect (and Improve) Hunting Access

10 Support Science-Based Wildlife Management

11 Challenge Government Overreach of Science-Based Management

12 Promote Collaboration with Global Communities, Wildlife Authorities, and Other Stakeholders Pursuing Sustainable Wildlife Stewardship

13 Champion Our Hunting Heritage



AN INTRODUCTION FROM CEO W. LAIRD HAMBERLIN

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 international conventions, or challenging misguided proposals that would restrict access to or sell-off 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.

We are making progress. In just the past quarter, we have stopped dangerous land sales, led the charge against transport bans, and stood firm against efforts to politicize wildlife science. But we cannot let up. The threats are persistent, and our opposition is organized and well-funded.

As you review this report, I encourage you to take pride in how far we have come and prepare for the work ahead. We are the first and most effective voice for hunters worldwide and with your support, we intend to stay that way.

In the fight for our hunting heritage,



W. Laird Hamberlin
Chief Executive Officer
Safari Club International

FISCAL 4TH QUARTER ADVOCACY REPORT SUMMARY

Safari Club International (SCI) closed 2025 Fiscal Year with landmark victories and persistent defense of hunting rights at the federal, state, and international levels. Staying true to its mission - **First for Hunters** - SCI leveraged litigation, legislation, education, and global collaboration to promote sustainable-use conservation and protect hunting access worldwide.

Key Legal & Legislative Victories

- **Launched the SCI Center for Conservation Law and Education,** centralizing litigation and education of decisionmakers under a new 501(c)(3) vehicle.
- **Alaska Supreme Court upheld non-resident hunting access,** with SCI's amicus briefs cited in defense of the Kodiak Island brown bear tag allocation.
- **Petitioned for ESA rulemaking** to encourage international conservation efforts and reduce import barriers for lion, elephant, and argali trophies.
- **Defeated restrictive public land sale language** in the federal "One Big Beautiful Bill" and secured a **$200 suppressor tax repeal**, a direct result of SCI's Lobby Day efforts.
- **Celebrated introduction of ESA Amendments Act** with SCI input to streamline international species imports.

Ongoing and Emerging Threats

- **Potential listing of gray wolves** and grizzly bear rule changes keep recovered species under ESA.
- **Trophy import bans looming** in countries like the UK, France, and Australia.
- **Anti-hunting ballot initiatives** in Colorado and Oregon continue to threaten predator management and lawful hunting practices.

State-Level Successes

- **Sunday hunting legalized** in Connecticut and Pennsylvania - SCI testified and led grassroots campaigns.
- **Bear hunt advanced in Florida**, with SCI's advocacy and op-eds influencing state commission approval.
- **Second Amendment protected in Nevada**, with veto of a bill restricting firearm access for young hunters.
- **Lead ammunition bans defeated** in Maryland and public hunting access protected in Wyoming.
- **Return of New York Big Five Trophy Ban** continues to threaten international conservation.

International Expansion & Impact

- **New SCI office opened in South Africa**, enhancing on-the-ground conservation partnerships.
- **Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners** coalition formed with like-minded organizations.
- **MOU signed with Southern African Development Community**, strengthening ties on CITES and international wildlife policy.
- **Continued defense of import bans** in Europe and lawsuit against trophy ban in Belgium.

Major Advocacy Initiatives & Engagements

- **Largest Lobby Day ever**, with over 100 SCI members meeting lawmakers in D.C. to advocate for suppressor reform, delisting wolves and grizzlies, and ESA reform.
- **Hunters' Embassy in Washington, D.C.** hosted educational events, Congressional fundraisers, and ESA policy briefings.
- **Hunter Information Service helped over 350 members** with trophy imports, travel logistics, and legal questions.

Science-Based Wildlife Management

- **Legal and policy support** for Louisiana and Florida bear hunts, gray wolf delisting, and mountain lion management across several states.
- **31 formal comment letters submitted** at the state level to defend science-backed hunting regulations and seasons.
- **CITES engagement continues** to advocate for minimal interference with sustainable-use programs.

Champion Our Hunting Heritage

- **Women Go Hunting initiative grew significantly,** with over 200 trophy entries during the "100 Women Challenge."
- **Continued to sponsor and attend** sportsmen's caucuses, national wildlife meetings, and outreach events across North America and Africa.

SCI's 4th Quarter reflects its unrelenting drive to be the most powerful voice for hunters around the world. Through strategic victories, relentless advocacy, and deepening global partnerships, SCI remains the leading defender of hunting freedom and sustainable wildlife conservation.

SCI is - and remains - First for Hunters.

SCI IS AT THE FRONT OF ISSUES FACING THE HUNTING COMMUNITY.

SCI's mission is to defend the freedom to hunt and promote sustainable-use wildlife conservation worldwide.

Our focus includes every continent and all huntable species. Our goals are to ensure that hunting continues to protect habitat and assist in the management of wildlife populations, as well as to promote our hunting heritage.

With your support, SCI is the only organization with a dedicated advocacy team, based in Washington, D.C. and globally, fighting for hunters on Capitol Hill, in State capitals, in courtrooms, and in Parliaments and international arenas.

SCI's advocacy efforts:

- Protect hunting access,
- Support science-based wildlife management,
- Challenge government overreach of science-based wildlife management,
- Promote collaboration with global communities, wildlife authorities, and other stakeholders pursuing sustainable wildlife stewardship, and
- Champion our hunting heritage.

It has been another busy quarter, with significant victories for the hunting community. Yet hunters continue to face pressure at home and abroad.



LEGAL VICTORIES

Making Our Legal and Educational Efforts More Accessible.

SCI launched the SCI Center for Conservation Law and Education, a § 501(c)(3) vehicle to consolidate our litigation and education of state, federal, and international decisionmakers. This initiative cements SCI's position as the global leader in championing sustainable-use wildlife conservation and hunting rights, and shaping education of the public and policymakers. Energy & Environment News featured the Center in one of its updates, available at https://www.eenews.net/articles/safari-club-kick-starts-new-legal-center/. The Center's website (with tax-deductible donation information) is: https://ccle.safariclub.org/.

Protecting Hunter Access in Alaska.

SCI celebrates the successful outcome of a lawsuit that would have reduced non-resident hunting access in Alaska. The Alaska Supreme Court rejected the plaintiff's challenge to the non-resident allocation of Kodiak Island brown bear hunting permits. SCI, with the Alaska Outdoor Coalition, submitted multiple amicus briefs in defense of the allocation. The Alaska Professional Hunters Association also filed an amicus brief. SCI's brief explained the allocation of non-resident tags is consistent with the Alaska Constitution because all Alaskans benefit from the funding brought into the state by non-residents. The Alaska Supreme Court agreed, reaffirming the State's judgment that guided hunting by non-residents brings conservation and economic benefits to Alaskans. SCI is proud to have played a role in defending the Alaska Board of Game's decision.

Encouraging Foreign Conservation Programs.

SCI submitted a petition for rulemaking to remove any special rules that conflict with Section 9(c)(2) of the Endangered Species Act, which presumes the legality of imports of threatened-listed species also on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. If approved, the petition would advance the ESA's directive to encourage foreign conservation and remove obstructions to the import of most lion, elephant, and argali hunting mementoes—increasing the conservation value of these species in their range states.

LOSSES

Challenging Traditional Ammunition.

Anti-hunting plaintiffs and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service settled a case in which the plaintiffs sought to prohibit the use of traditional lead ammunition on the Canaan Valley National Wildlife Refuge in West Virginia. SCI and partners intervened to defend the use of traditional ammunition, but the Service settled the case and agreed to reconsider the issue in a forthcoming rulemaking. Also, despite SCI's opposition, the plaintiffs were awarded $30,000 in attorneys' fees for doing nothing to advance conservation.

THREATS

Waiting in the Wings.

Anti-hunting groups are chomping at the bit to sue the Trump Administration for any pro-hunting rules. These groups proudly publicize the 200+ suits they filed against the first Trump Administration. They have challenged personnel and other decisions; lawsuits against any pro-hunting or pro-Second Amendment actions are guaranteed. (But never fear—SCI is ready to join those lawsuits to defend hunting rights!)

Relisting Gray Wolves.

SCI and partners are defending the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to deny a petition to relist wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains states. The petitioners challenged that decision in Montana federal court. That judge could reject the Service's reasoning, potentially putting those wolves on a path back to federal management.

FEDERAL VICTORIES

Protecting Public Lands in One Big Beautiful Bill.

The "One Big Beautiful Bill," a comprehensive budget reconciliation bill, was signed into law on July 4. Following a public battle and widespread outreach from American hunters including nearly 1,000 SCI members, a measure from Senator Mike Lee to sell off public lands was stripped from the final version.

Reducing Suppressor Taxes.

Another victory came out of the reconciliation bill with the elimination of the $200 excise tax that was previously required for the transfer of suppressors under the National Firearms Act. This was a priority that SCI members lobbied for at our 2025 Lobby Day.

Fixing the Endangered Species Act.

House Natural Resources Committee Chair and former SCI Legislator of the Year Bruce Westerman introduced the ESA Amendments Act of 2025, a bill that would make broad changes to the Endangered Species Act, removing red tape and creating greater transparency and accountability in recovering species. Among several favorable provisions, SCI worked directly with Chair Westerman's team to draft language regarding international species, which will make importing easier and reduce regulatory redundancy.

LOSSES

Continued Work on Suppressors.

Although we had a major win with the removal of the $200 tax stamp for suppressors, the Senate Parliamentarian stripped out another provision to fully remove suppressors from the National Firearms Act. That would have eliminated all the associated registration, fingerprinting, and waiting period requirements. We will continue to work with both chambers to pass this measure in another vehicle or as a standalone bill.

THREATS

Protecting Public Lands.

While public land sales were ultimately stripped from the reconciliation bill, certain members of Congress still have an appetite for selling land to raise revenues. We will need to stay vigilant and continue to work with our champions in Congress to prevent this kind of measure from gaining momentum in the future.



STATE VICTORIES

Opening of Sunday Hunting!

Blue laws are coming down in the eastern U.S. The Connecticut legislature passed the opening of Sunday hunting, as did the Pennsylvania legislature. SCI has been a strong advocate for both provisions—including testimony, op-eds, and more—and celebrates this significant expansion of hunting opportunity.



Moving Toward a Florida Bear Hunt.

SCI has been a strong advocate for opening a bear hunt in Florida—the state with the most human-bear conflicts in the country. At its May meeting, the Florida Wildlife Conservation Commission approved the state agency's proposal to open a limited bear hunt in four management units. SCI and members submitted comments in support, and SCI Foundation's Maria Davidson penned an op-ed (available at https://www.orlandosentinel.com/2025/06/01/commentary-fwc-bear-hunt-is-about-restoring-balance/). SCI looks forward to a final vote for approval to take place at the August Commission meeting, with the season to open in December!

Protecting the Second Amendment in Nevada.

SCI joined a coalition letter opposing Assembly Bill 245, which would prohibit individuals under the age of 21 from possessing certain firearms, including semi-automatic shotguns and semi-automatic centerfire rifles, impacting the recruitment of hunters. SCI applauds Nevada Governor Lombardo for vetoing this unlawful bill.

LOSSES

Looming Trophy Import Ban.

The New York legislature adjourned for the year without passing the perennial "Big Five African Trophies Act." But SCI considers the fact the bill came up, yet again, to be a loss. SCI has long advocated against this bill, and explained to the legislature that the bill is likely illegal under federal law. The bill is eligible to be taken up again by the Assembly at the beginning of 2026.

Reduced Coyote Season in Michigan.

SCI has supported a lawsuit challenging the Michigan Natural Resource Commission's decision to reduce the coyote season. That closure remains in effect—but there is a high likelihood the Commission will revert back to year-round hunting during their next meeting. SCI previously testified and intends to testify in support of that reopening.

THREATS

"Rewilding" Initiative in Colorado.

Anti-hunting forces have filed another Initiative Petition, IP 98, in Colorado. Notwithstanding being rebuffed by the voters in November on Proposition 127, IP 98 is the third attempt at creating an alternative wildlife commission, the "Wildlife and Ecosystem Conservation Commission," to focus on "rewilding." The proposal is fraught with technical issues and unlikely to make it on the ballot, but SCI will continue to monitor and engage, as necessary.

Oregon Initiative to Ban Hunting.

Initiative Petition 28 is the latest iteration of the egregious effort to criminalize killing an animal for any reason including hunting, fishing, and trapping in Oregon. The petition, previously known as IP 13 and IP 3, would make it illegal to trap mice or gophers, teach using animals, raise and slaughter animals for food, or even breed animals, yet it has 50,000 signatures (of the 117,000 necessary to reach the ballot) in support at last count. SCI continues to follow its progress to ensure this overly broad restriction does not reach the ballot.

INTERNATIONAL VICTORIES

Expanding Our Global Footprint.

SCI expanded its global presence with a new office in South Africa, underscoring our long-standing commitment to science-based conservation, sustainable hunting, and international advocacy. Opening our doors on African soil offers a unique opportunity to further engage with African leaders, local partners, outfitters, and conservation agencies to advance the shared mission of protecting wildlife and preserving our hunting heritage. It will serve as a regional base for SCI and SCI Foundation's operations that fund and support projects across the African continent.

Establishing the Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners.

SCI and three partner organizations have established the Canadian Wildlife Conservation Partners, which unifies pro-sustainable use organizations for a more forceful advocacy impact in Canada.

Collaborating with the Southern African Development Community.

SCI and the SCI Foundation have agreed in principle to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Southern African Development Community, which will strengthen SCI's relationship with governments throughout the region and increase collaboration on the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and other areas of mutual interest.

LOSSES

Liberal Victory in Canada.

Canada's April elections resulted in the Liberal Party maintaining control of the federal government. Although SCI will continue to push for pro-hunting policies, a Conservative majority would have been significantly more favorable.

THREATS

International Hunting Trophy Bans.

Hunters continue to face hunting trophy import or possession bans in several countries. The United Kingdom is still considering a trophy import ban, despite vocal opposition from the southern African countries conserving the world's largest populations of elephant, lions, leopards, and more. France is also considering an import ban. Australia's majority party likewise has hinted at such a ban. And SCI's Benelux Chapter continues its legal challenge to Belgium's trophy import ban.

In addition to those highlights, *SCI has continued to advance its five priorities* with specific actions.

PROTECT (AND IMPROVE) HUNTING ACCESS

Hunters on the Hill 2025.

On May 15, SCI hosted its annual Lobby Day in Washington, D.C. SCI members from around the country flew in to visit their Members of Congress, to educate and advocate on issues of importance for sustainable-use conservation. This was the largest Lobby Day on record. Over 100 members engaged in over 200 meetings, making our voices heard in support of reforming the Endangered Species Act, delisting gray wolves and grizzly bears, protecting access for hunters and anglers, reforming how suppressors are regulated under federal law, and rationalizing the wage law for outfitters operating on federal lands. We saw immediate success when one of our priorities (suppressor reform) was included in the budget reconciliation bill. Although ultimately stripped by Senate rules, the inclusion of this language helps demonstrate the power of Hunters on the Hill!

Celebrating Our Political Champions.

On May 14, SCI toasted two of our champions: our federal Legislator of the Year Senator John Curtis (R-UT) and our Governor of the Year Governor Jeff Landry of Louisiana. Over 100 guests packed the Hunters' Embassy to thank the Senator and Governor for their leadership on behalf of sportsmen and women. Guests also enjoyed fresh beignets and alligator bites hunted in Louisiana!

Opening Doors through the Hunters' Embassy.

It was a busy quarter for all events at the Hunters' Embassy. SCI promoted hunting rights and sustainable-use conservation through a lunch and learn featuring James Cummins, Executive Director of Wildlife Mississippi and Vice-Chair of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. Cummins led a course on the Endangered Species Act and potential Wildlife Habitat Recovery Credit. SCI has also hosted a half-dozen fundraisers bringing a half-dozen members of Congress through the Hunters' Embassy. SCI also hosted Senate Finance Committee Chair Mike Crapo (R-ID) and the National Republican Senatorial Committee for a political update with over 80 attendees.

Supporting the Opening of Additional Hunting and Fishing.

SCI submitted comments on the 2025-2026 Station-Specific Hunting and Sport Fishing Regulations (also called the Hunt Fish Rule). The proposed rule opens hunting opportunities on nine National Wildlife Refuges and expands hunting opportunities on seven National Wildlife Refuges, across approximately 87,000 acres. SCI's comment appreciates these openings while asking for further collaboration with local hunting groups to identify additional potential openings.

Defending Federal Approval of Hunting Trophies to the U.S. Supreme Court.

SCI and the Property and Environment Research Center filed an amicus brief in support of Supreme Court review of a case improperly limiting the scope of Endangered Species Act preemption. The Second Circuit Court of Appeals narrowly construed a provision of the ESA preventing states from adopting laws that would prohibit activities permitted by the ESA itself or by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulation. This interpretation directly conflicts with decisions from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, as well as the Service's practice. SCI demonstrated our strong interest in protecting the Service's authority to use import permits to promote conservation in foreign countries.

Supporting Congressional Efforts to Expand Hunting Access.

SCI joined several letters in support of pro-hunting bills pending before the U.S. Congress. SCI joined a coalition letter supporting the Wetlands Conservation and Access Improvement Act of 2025. The bill would reauthorize the transfer of interest from Pittman-Robertson funds to the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through 2033. SCI also joined a coalition letter supporting the Sporting Goods Excise Tax Modernization Act and reviewing the rules for de minimis eligibility on fishing and archery equipment. And SCI led a coalition letter supporting a proposed wildlife habitat recovery tax credit.

Supporting Access to Suppressors.

SCI joined a successful letter in support to include provisions of the Hearing Protection Act in the reconciliation bill, largely known as the "One Big Beautiful Bill." That letter came to us from our partners at the American Suppressor Association . House leadership acted on the letter and included language from the Hearing Protection Act in the reconciliation package. SCI will shortly join the ASA and other partners in challenging New Jersey's ban on the possession of suppressors.

Protecting Hunting Access in Wyoming.

SCI was pleased to see an announcement from the Bureau of Land Management that it would reconsider the Rock Springs Resource Management Plan. SCI submitted comments opposing this plan and requesting specific changes. The Bureau's announcement indicates that it is taking seriously the comments from SCI and many others (including the State of Wyoming) in opposition to the Plan.

Celebrating Access to Traditional Lead Ammunition.

SCI celebrated the failure of two bills in Maryland to ban the use of lead ammunition for the hunting of all species. SCI vigorously opposed this legislation. Eastern State and Local Liaison Bee Frederick testified against the bills twice. SCI led a coalition letter opposing the measures, sent a grassroots Action Alert, and worked with partners

to educate lawmakers on the detrimental impacts these overreaching bills would have.

Opposing Restrictions on Hunting with Hounds.

SCI issued an Action Alert for an April 11 meeting of the Arizona Game and Fish Commission, in which the Commission considered two anti-hunting petitions seeking to ban the use of dogs for hunting bears, mountain lions, and other mammals. Many hunters responded to the call and commented in opposition to these petitions. SCI applauds the Commission's decision to deny these petitions.

Supporting the Nomination of Kate MacGregor.

SCI joined a coalition letter supporting Kate MacGregor's nomination as the next Deputy Secretary of the Interior. MacGregor's vast experience in natural resource management will be critical in advancing conservation, promoting recreation, and balancing the complexities of the Department. MacGregor has demonstrated strong support for hunters' rights and spoken twice at SCI events, including during Convention.

SUPPORT SCIENCE-BASED WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Defending Science-Based Decisions for Gray Wolves.

This quarter, SCI continued its decades-long fight for sensible gray wolf management by filing its final brief in the latest round of litigation in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. SCI, the NRA, the State of Utah, and the federal government continue to defend the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's 2020 decision to delist wolves from the Endangered Species Act throughout most of the lower-48 states. A California federal district court overturned the delisting in favor of anti-hunting organizations that challenged the delisting. SCI and our partner were the first to jointly appeal the judge's ruling and remain hopeful that this Court will finally put an end to unnecessary and unproductive litigation and put wolves back under state management where they belong. In addition, SCI, along with partners, sought the dismissal of three cases brought by animal rights groups to re-list wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains under the Endangered Species Act. SCI and partners pointed out the plaintiffs' lack of standing and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's science-based denial of the plaintiffs' petitions was correct. Oral argument was held in June and SCI expects a decision soon from a federal judge in Montana. Read more about SCI's long history of defending the science-based management of gray wolves at https://safariclub.org/sci-continues-to-defend-science-based-decision-making-for-gray-wolves/.

Opposing Changes in Grizzly Bear Policy.

SCI submitted comments in opposition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's new approach to the listing of grizzly bears across the lower 48 states. Since 1993, the Service and its state and private partners have strived to recover individual grizzly bear populations. SCI has gone to court twice to defend the delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly population. But in its newly proposed rule, the Service completely changed how it views individual grizzly bear populations. SCI's comment objected to this change, which likely violates federal law and fails to recognize successful state recovery efforts that have led to huge expansions of grizzly bear numbers and range. If the Service goes forward with the rule, SCI's comment requests additional special regulations to allow hunting.

Ensuring Accuracy in Colorado.

SCI and partners successfully concluded our lawsuit against Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commissioners Jessica Beaulieu and Jack Murphy. The lawsuit alleged that these Commissioners violated Colorado's Open Meetings Law in publishing an op-ed in support of Proposition 127, a ballot initiative that would have banned the hunting of mountain lions, bobcats, and lynx, by discussing this initiative without providing the public access required by the Open Meetings Law. As part of a settlement to resolve the matter, the Commission agreed to provide a training to the Commissioners on the Open Meetings Law and on current Colorado law governing the take of mountain lion, bobcat, and lynx. The op-ed misrepresented facts about the legality of this hunting. SCI is proud of this win for science-based wildlife management in Colorado!

Engaging with State Regulators.

SCI's State Liaisons submitted 31 comments this quarter. Each letter reinforces the importance of expanding hunting access and ensuring science-based decisions by state commissions and legislatures. Highlights include:

- In California, SCI joined a coalition letter in support of Senate Bill 818, which would have created a five-year pilot program to allow the use of skilled and permitted houndsmen to humanely haze mountain

lions deemed to be a threat to public safety, livestock, or pets. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of committee. SCI also joined a coalition letter and submitted individual comments in support of Assembly Bill 1038, to establish a bear pursuit season using dogs. This bill would assist in re-educating bears on their natural fear of humans using a humane, non-lethal, and science-backed approach that protects bears and people.

- SCI filed comments in the Pelican State in support of expanding Louisiana's black bear hunting season from one to three hunting units and from 11 to 26 permits. The Louisiana black bear is a conservation success story, having gone from being listed under the Endangered Species Act to becoming a game species and, last year, opening the first bear hunting season since the 1980s.

- In Nevada, SCI submitted comments in support of setting the black bear quota and harvest limits, as well as setting quotas for moose and other big game. SCI has specifically supported these quotas over the last several years. SCI also joined two letters and a resolution to the state legislature addressing concerns for fully implementing the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

- SCI joined a coalition letter supporting South Carolina House Bill 2872, to establish a minimum acreage of South Carolina Department of Natural Resources-owned lands open to hunting. This bill would protect hunting access for sportsmen and women in South Carolina.

- In Utah, SCI submitted comments on the Taking Big Game Rule. SCI's comments supported additional flexibility proposed for youth hunters as well as lessening restrictions on hunters for import of big game skulls from states with Chronic Wasting Disease due to low transmission risk.

- SCI submitted three separate comments in Washington State regarding appropriate hunting seasons for large carnivores. The first objected to the removal of spring bear season dates from the auction, raffle, and special permits rule and requested the re-opening of the spring bear season. The second supported the 2025 fall bear season and requested the re-opening of the spring bear season. The third objected to proposed changes in the 2025 cougar season as they will likely result in the loss of hunter opportunity.

Promoting New Hunting Opportunities in Connecticut.

SCI submitted formal testimony in support of opening Sunday hunting (House Bill 7231) in Connecticut. House Bill 7231 would significantly expand access by fully repealing the Sunday hunting ban. SCI also submitted testimony in support of Senate Bill 1523, which would allow for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to establish the first-ever black bear hunt in the state to help control the increasing black bear population. SCI has a been vocal advocate of opening a season to responsibly manage the expanding bear population. SCI also published an op ed in support.

Facilitating Science-Based Decisions by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

SCI facilitated a very positive meeting between the Professional Hunters Association of South Africa and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focusing on giraffe, Cape mountain zebra, brown hyena, and increased engagement between these entities when making decision for the import of foreign species.

CHALLENGE GOVERNMENT OVERREACH OF SCIENCE-BASED MANAGEMENT

Opposing Public Lands Sales that Harm Our Hunting Heritage.

SCI issued a statement and Action Alert to oppose language from the Senate budget reconciliation process proposing the sale of federal public lands in the Western U.S.

Protecting the Second Amendment.

SCI submitted letters opposing state bills that would restrict lawful firearms ownership and reduce excise taxes that fund state conservation efforts. In Washington, SCI joined a coalition letter opposing House Bill 1386, a state-level excise tax on the sale of firearms and ammunition and a direct assault on hunters and gun owners. SCI also joined a coalition letter opposing Senate Bill 5098, which would restrict the possession of firearms, knives, and other weapons on the premises of state or local public buildings. In Oregon, SCI joined a coalition letter opposing an anti-gun ownership omnibus bill which would outlaw semi-automatic rifles and shotguns, such as those used

in hunting, and restrict the ability of individuals under 21 to use firearms not owned by a parent. This restriction would curtail high school shooting sports, as one example.

Celebrating Another Year Without Undue Restrictions in New York.

With the adjournment of New York's General Assembly, two longstanding SCI priorities are officially done for this year. Neither the perennial "Big Five African Trophies Act" (Senate Bill 5014) nor an attempt to restrict the use of traditional lead ammunition moved forward before legislators gaveled out and headed home for the year. SCI has repeatedly advocated against these measures, which are unsupported by any science and would harm sustainable-use conservation by reducing hunting participation.

Promoting Access through Litigation.

SCI applauds the Trump Administration's progress in removing restrictions on hunting bears in Alaska. Since 2017, SCI has litigated a regulation that prohibits the harvest of black bears over bait on National Preserves. Despite a victory in the first Trump Administration, SCI was prepared to return to court to challenge a 2024 rule reimposing this harvest ban. But the second Trump Administration beat us to it. On January 21, the President issued an Executive Order directing the repeal of this regulation. SCI sent a letter requesting the process be expedited, with additional revisions to overreaching regulations. This proposed rule is currently pending before the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs. SCI has requested a meeting with the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to discuss our letter.

Rationalizing Regulation of Federal Outfitters.

SCI previously filed two amicus briefs in support of a challenge to a Department of Labor regulation that mandated federal minimum wage and overtime for hunting outfitters and other contractors on federal land. This regulation ignored the reality of the outfitting industry, where overnight trips can quickly exceed a 40-hour workweek. Unfortunately, the arguments of plaintiffs and SCI were rejected by a federal appeals court and the U.S. Supreme Court. But in March, President Trump issued another Executive Order directing repeal of the Department of Labor regulation. In May, Representatives Burgess Owens (R-UT) and Blake Moore (R-UT) introduced legislation, the "Outdoor Recreational Outfitting and Guiding Act", to permanently fix the problem. SCI provided input into the draft bill and was quoted in the press release. Thus, while we did not succeed in court, we expect to achieve the overall objective of removing this barrier.

PROMOTE COLLABORATION WITH GLOBAL COMMUNITIES, WILDLIFE AUTHORITIES, AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS PURSUING SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE STEWARDSHIP

Promoting Sustainable Use through Participation in International Meetings.

The European Federation for Hunting and Conservation (FACE) recently held its annual Members' Meeting in Zagreb, Croatia, where FACE also celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Croation Hunting Federation. SCI's International Affairs Liaison, Jeremy Clare, attended the two-day meeting. Among other subjects, management of large carnivores was discussed throughout the meeting. Jeremy presented on the United States' experience with wolf management and the lessons learned that the European Union could use as it grapples with downlisting wolves. SCI thanks FACE for its hospitality in Croatia and looks forward to continuing our strong partnership on all issues that impact hunting in Europe!

Visiting Partners Around the Country and Around the World.

SCI's Advocacy Team has been busy at various meetings, promoting sustainable-use conservation and SCI's engagement on a range of issues. The team conducted 20 field visits from Alaska to Iowa, New Jersey to Florida, hosting and attending legislative receptions, providing testimony at hearings, and representing SCI at various regional and national meetings.

- In Alabama, Eastern State and Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation's "Bass & Bucks at the Barn" event. During the evening, Frederick engaged with state and national partners on various issues of importance to SCI. Frederick also attended the Alabama Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus breakfast

in Montgomery, where SCI was a host sponsor of the event. The morning featured remarks from Caucus and Agriculture/Forestry Committee Chair Danny Crawford as well as an update from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Commissioner Chris Blankenship on the Department's legislative priorities and concerns.

- Senior Litigation Counsel Regina Lennox fulfilled a bucket-list item by headlining at a casino: she gave the keynote address at the SCI Iowa Chapter Banquet on Saturday, June 21, at the Prairie Meadows Casino and Hotel. Lennox spoke about SCI's broad advocacy program, especially its 40-year-old legal program.

- Eastern State and Local Liaison Bee Frederick and Deputy Director for Advocacy Chris Tymeson participated in the Kansas One Shot Turkey Hunt, meeting with current and prospective members as well as government officials and representatives from other conservation organizations. In addition to the "Conservation Conversation" on turkey research and hunter recruitment, the event raised scholarship funds for students at the local community college. And Frederick's last-minute bird also took third place in the contest portion of the event!

- Frederick visited Columbia, South Carolina to attend the South Carolina Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus reception. During and following the event, Frederick met with elected officials—including former State Legislator of the Year Representative Bobby Cox, agency staff, and partners to promote SCI and discuss priority issues. Included among the issues were pending changes to the bear hunting season and public land no-net-loss legislation.

- In Tennessee, Frederick attended the Tennessee Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus Breakfast. The event brought together elected officials, agency leaders, and sportsmen and women's representatives to discuss conservation issues. Frederick promoted issues of importance to SCI such as wetlands protection, as well as SCI's Annual Convention in Nashville.

- Deputy Director for Advocacy Chris Tymeson traveled to Rockport, Texas to attend the 67th annual conference of the Texas Outdoor Writers Association. Tymeson addressed the group regarding SCI's advocacy activities.

- Tymeson also traveled to the Peach State for the NRA's 154th Annual Meeting in Atlanta. Tymeson worked with Texas Trophy Hunters Association and SCI staff on the convention floor, meeting and answering questions for current and prospective members.

- In New Hampshire, Eastern State and Local Liaison Bee Frederick attended the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Annual Meeting for networking and discussions about SCI's advocacy and conservation activities.

- On April 25, hunters, anglers, and conservationists from across the Centennial State gathered in Denver for a day of celebration on the Capitol lawn. SCI was there to advocate for responsible wildlife management and the important role that hunting and fishing play in Colorado. Litigation Associate Madie Demaske attended and engaged with members of the conservation community on issues pertinent to SCI, its chapters, and its members. SCI's Colorado Chapter helped sponsor the event, which was co-organized by the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and Colorado Wildlife Conservation Partnership, of which SCI is a member.

- In Alaska, Demaske attended meetings alongside the SCI Alaska Chapter with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and the Alaska Federation of Natives. Topics included hunting on Alaska National Preserves and navigability determinations, among other things.

- The International Council for Game and Wildlife Conservation General Assembly met in Doha for two days of discussions on conservation as well as internal business. SCI was represented by International Affairs Liaison Jeremy Clare and Europe Liaison Juan Magaz. They had the opportunity to share advocacy and conservation actions and learn from good practices to promote hunting worldwide.

CHAMPION OUR HUNTING HERITAGE

Showing Support for the Cowboy State.

The Wyoming Outfitter and Guide Association held their annual general meeting and convention on April 5-6 in Casper. SCI sponsored a portion of the awards and a reception for a record-setting crowd. Scott Talbott, Guide and Outfitter Liaison, attended along with 310 members and guests, the most ever for this event. Talbott passed away shortly after his participation in this meeting. He will be greatly missed. Emphasized at his service was one of Talbott's mantras during his battle with cancer: "Look up." We all looked up to Scott Talbott, and we will continue to look up to him, to help guide our steps.

Assisting Members, One-by-One.

SCI's Hunter Information Service is a concierge program by which SCI members can ask questions about pretty much anything related to a successful hunt, at home or internationally. In the past quarter, more than 350 SCI members received one-on-one assistance with trophy imports, hunting travel, travel with firearms, insurance, vetting of hunting operators, and resolving disputes with hunting operators. In addition to directly assisting members, the Hunter Information Service also investigated, reported, and followed developments impacting hunters, providing details and guidance around U.S. State Department Travel Alerts, a terrorist attack on hunting and conservation camps in Mozambique, new visa requirements for Namibia, guidance on travel bans, and the seizure of 3,000 trophies awaiting export in Argentina.

Promoting Women in Hunting.

SCI's Women Go Hunting initiative launched this year's Hunting Awards Challenge, celebrating women of all hunting experience levels and helping them document their hunting accomplishments, share their hunting journeys, and encourage other women to adopt the hunting lifestyle. The Challenge encourages women to join SCI and to participate in our World Hunting Awards Program through the Record Book.









