

SCI GRASSROOTS ALERT

BEAR BAITING BAN BILL GAINS MOMENTUM

Despite the collective efforts of the sport-hunting community, there are 129 cosponsors signed on to a bill that would ban hunting bears over bait on federal lands. 45 of these sponsors signed-on within the last week

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

It is extremely important that you make your voice heard! Contact members of the House Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans and ask them to **vote no** on HR 1472, also known as the Don't Feed the Bears Act. Please consult the following website to find your representative and his or her contact information:

<http://www.house.gov/writerep/> or call the Washington D.C. office at 1(800) 711-8315.

In addition to contacting your representative, please be certain to contact the Chairman of the Resources Committee, Richard Pombo (R-CA) as well. Chairman Pombo may be reached by email (rpombo@mail.house.gov) or fax (202) 226-0861.

TALKING POINTS

HR 1472 Don't Feed the Bears Act

Position: SCI supports bear management at the state level and strongly feels that intervention at the federal level is unnecessary. State fish and wildlife agencies act within their legal authority to oversee internal wildlife management. Wildlife management is impossible to efficiently manage at the federal level as factors like famine, population, disease and other issues vary widely within each state. The "Don't Feed the Bears Act" (HR 1472) was introduced on March 28th and seeks to end bear baiting practices. SCI opposes this bill.

SCI opposes HR 1472 for the following reasons:

- **The issue of wildlife management, including the lawful means of hunting game, is specifically a state-right issue and this effort would be another attempt by Big Brother in Washington to force states into action.**
- **TRAFFIC, a division of World Wildlife Fund, released a study in April 2002 reporting a large and healthy black bear populations and contributed the population to careful management by state agencies. TRAFFIC also reported that the only significant problem for black bears in North America is bear-human conflicts.**
- **The states have been doing an excellent job of managing bear populations and limiting the number of bear-human conflicts. Black bear populations across the US are at historic highs. Hunting is viewed as a viable management tool in keeping rising bear populations in check and is an important tool in reducing bear-human conflict.**
- **The use of baiting as a means of hunting bear is currently permitted in at least nine of the twenty seven states that allow bear hunting.**

- **Bear baiting is viewed as a legal and ethical and in some cases is viewed the best way in reducing bear numbers by wildlife professionals in each state.**
- **HR 1472 would encroach on the authority of states to manage their wildlife resources and set a precedent for unneeded federal intervention in wildlife-management issues.**
- **The bill is a thinly veiled anti hunting effort that has been attempted in several congresses without success.**

Because of low visibility in denser forests, in the northeast especially, bear baiting is necessary for bear management. Banning bear baiting would essentially eliminate bear management in these densely forested areas.