
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 1169 (Jeff Gonzalez) - Wildlife grants: Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement program

Version: July 17, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: N.R. & W. 7 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Ashley Ames

Bill Summary: This bill would raise the compensation available to a landowner who participates in the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program, which offers hunting and fishing opportunities, to \$52 per acre or \$87 per public participant for the 2026 calendar year and index the compensation limit thereafter, among other provisions.

Fiscal Impact:

- Ongoing cost pressures of an unknown but likely significant amount (SHARE Account) to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) due to raising the compensation available to a landowner who participates in the SHARE program. CDFW compensation through the SHARE program may not exceed permit application fee revenue collected by the department, minus the costs associated with operating the program.

Background: AB 396 (Harman, Chapter 394, Statutes of 2003) established the SHARE program (Fish and Game Code (FGC) §§1570 et seq.). 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. California's lands cover approximately 101 million acres and over half of that is 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 areas available for recreational activities. Maximum compensation to the landowner is calculated as up to \$30 per acre or up to \$50 per participant. Acreage and participant compensation rates were set in 2003 and 2009, respectively.

Hunters who wish to participate in a SHARE hunt apply online and each application for a specific hunt is \$14.86. Recent SHARE participation data is shown in the table below. Information about each SHARE hunt is available on CDFW's website – such as the specific species, day or days of the hunt, and any restrictions imposed by the landowner. For elk, there were 59 SHARE hunt opportunities for a total of 93 animals. The application acceptance rate was generally low (less than 1%), but overall hunter success at hunting and taking an elk last year was pretty good – almost 75%. There are additional SHARE hunt opportunities for waterfowl, dove, pheasant, quail, deer, wild pig, turkey, and bear. According to the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee,

there are 15 counties with properties in the SHARE program, mostly in Humboldt County. There was one SHARE sport fishing opportunity listed, although it is currently closed.

CDFW awarded 293 and 329 access permits via random draw under the SHARE program in 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Proposed Law: This bill would raise the compensation available to a landowner who participates in the SHARE program to \$52 per acre or \$87 per public participant for the 2026 calendar year and index the compensation limit thereafter, among other provisions.

Specifically, this bill would:

1. Require, instead of authorize, CDFW to make grants or enter into agreements with conservation-oriented nonprofit organizations, or others, as provided, when CDFW finds that the grants or agreements are necessary for carrying out the purposes of this article.
2. Add services to implement the SHARE program as an item that CDFW is authorized to reimburse a nonprofit organization, a private landowner, or other entity for.
3. Raise the limit on financial compensation to a private landowner to \$52 per acre or \$87 per public participant per day for the 2026 calendar year and authorize indexing annually thereafter, as provided.
4. Sunset these provisions on January 1, 2031.
5. This bill would require the Director CDFW, on or before October 1, 2029, to submit a written report to the Legislature that evaluates the effect of changes to the SHARE program, as provided.

Related Legislation:

AB 1423 (Berryhill, Chapter 394, Statutes of 2009), allowed the SHARE program to be initiated without the Fish and Game Commission verifying sufficient public interest, expanded the properties that may be used for the SHARE program, and authorized 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.

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