

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2019

The Honorable Eduardo Garcia
Chair, Assembly Committee on Water, Parks, and Wildlife
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Regarding: AB 527 (Voepel) – **SUPPORT**

Dear Assemblymember Garcia:

We write in strong support of AB 527, by Assemblymember Voepel. This important measure removes a January 1, 2020, prohibition on the importation, possession or sale of alligator and crocodile products in California. The sustainable-use of the alligator resource and a viable trade in alligator products are both fundamental to Louisiana's successful approach to wildlife and habitat conservation and to our local economies and cultural heritage.

At the core of AB 527 is Louisiana's 57-year history of proactive species and habitat conservation policies. These policies are based on exhaustive scientific research and were carefully planned with numerous quantifiable checks and balances. With respect to the American alligator, implementation of these policies is based upon the findings and expertise of veterinarians, conservation biologists, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) under the United Nations' regulation and monitoring of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) treaty.

Consequently, Louisiana's community-based alligator program is recognized globally as among the most successful species restoration and conservation efforts in history. The program brought back alligators from near extinction to their full historical level of abundance. The program is founded on the principles of sustainable-use that incentivize responsible alligator resource management and wetland habitat conservation to the further benefit of a wide range of fish and wildlife species.

The alligator trade is intensively monitored and controlled by state and federal agencies throughout the supply-chain to ensure full compliance with all state, federal and international regulations. To ensure ethical and human treatment, harvests on alligator farms are conducted according to procedures developed by veterinary professionals and approved by the American Veterinary Association. Today, the American alligator is no longer endangered but is a thriving, sustainable population. It supports an equally sustainable local economy as well as the Cajun and Creole cultures coveted by our state.

Ultimately, the success of Louisiana's sustainable-use alligator conservation program depends upon a viable trade. Therefore, in reality, the impending prohibition on the sale of alligator products in California beginning in 2020 will serve to undermine, not advance, alligator conservation, at great collateral cost to our state's far-reaching wildlife and habitat conservation programs and to our local economy and cultures.

With these many considerations in mind, we reiterate our strong support for AB 527.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senate



John Kennedy
United States Senate



Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Member of Congress