

October 5, 2020

The Honorable Philip D. Murphy
Governor of the State of New Jersey
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Dear Governor Murphy,

Thank you for leading our state through the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in a collaborative and socially progressive manner. I am writing today to echo the wishes of my fellow legislators and citizens of the great state of New Jersey that the annual bear hunt beginning on October 12 be officially cancelled, due to legitimate and overwhelming humanitarian and public health concerns.

From a humanitarian perspective, these hunts do not align with our progressive values. Lacking proof from any state agency that there remains a black bear overpopulation problem, inviting organized hunts of this nature is cruel and against overwhelming public opinion. In fact, Alaska—a state where bears far outnumber humans—is the only other trophy hunting state in the country which allows hunters to kill bear cubs.

From a public health standpoint, it is virtually impossible to adequately enforce quarantine measures for bear hunters coming from other states, including states currently experiencing spikes in cases of COVID-19. Additionally, cold temperatures and extended time outside are believed to increase the risk of infection, and transmission both during and after these hunts.

With so many types of social gatherings being restricted, allowing these organized hunts, which inevitably increase close social interaction between hunters, does not align with our state's established, scientifically-rooted public gathering restrictions.

I am asking your office to officially call off the October bear hunt and future organized hunts. This twice-annual hunt, which began under Governor Chris Christie in 2010, does not align with our values and has not proven to be necessary.

In less than three years, you have already made great progress in undoing many of the deleterious fiscal, social and public safety measures instituted by Governor Christie. I hope you will continue this positive trend by banning the black bear hunt before it begins on October 12. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Annette Chaparro
New Jersey General Assembly (D-33)