

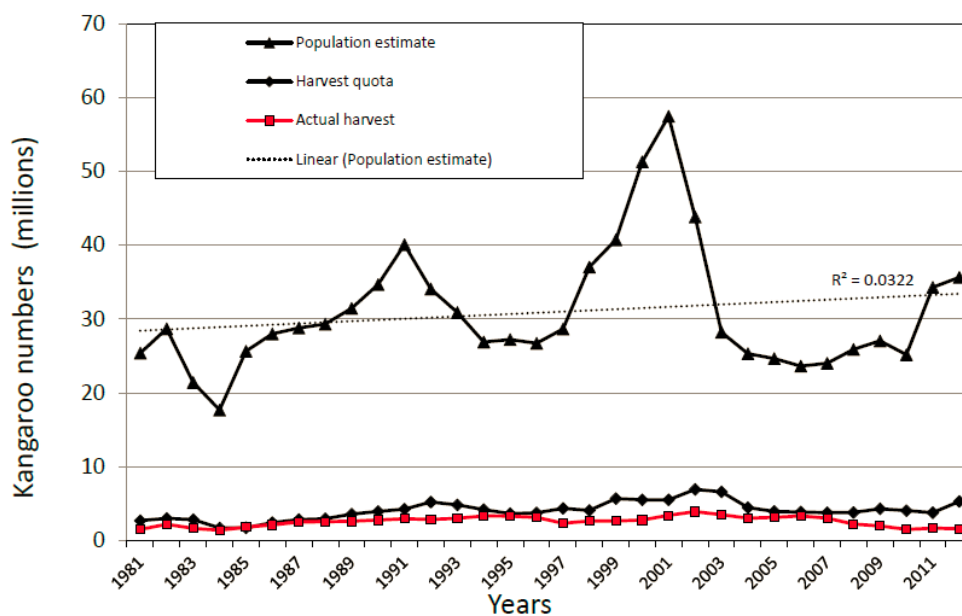
California State Assembly
 State of California
 State Capitol, Room 4164
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Support for California Assembly Bill 1188 (Gipson)

I understand there is debate about whether there should be ongoing sale of kangaroo products in California. I am writing to suggest that there are few, if any, reasons not to do so and many reasons why supporting the commercial kangaroo industry makes very sound ecological, animal welfare, social and economic sense.

In understanding the situation with kangaroos in Australia, it is important to note that the kangaroos that are harvested are on private rangelands given over to cattle and sheep grazing. There are on the long term average some 35 million of them competing with 8 million cattle and 40 million sheep. The industry does not operate in national parks or reserves.

The Australian kangaroo management programs have tightly regulated procedures which are widely recognised as world best practice in wildlife management. Importantly the commercial harvest is the tool which enables kangaroo's populations to be kept at levels which the rangelands can sustain. Without it kangaroo populations can quickly expand when seasonal conditions are favourable to levels which cause environmental damage and biodiversity loss. If numbers get too high, kangaroos also suffer from starvation which is the opposite of the intention that I assume is behind proposed opposition to commercial harvest. The peaks and declines in the graph below correspond to good seasons and then droughts when breeding rates and mortality increases. The fluctuations are independent of the harvest which is also shown.



Harvest has no relationship to population changes

When it comes to the actual harvesting, adherence to The Code of Practice for the Humane Harvesting of Kangaroos is an enforced condition of every kangaroo harvesting licence. It details best practices in all aspects of the harvest. An unintended consequence of success by the opponents of commercial harvesting is that animals are still shot but by amateurs over which governments have little or no control.

I am one of many Australian ecologists that propose that kangaroo harvesting should actually expand and not contract, to the point where it offers a real agricultural alternative to grazing of livestock that did not evolve in Australia. We know there are real environmental benefits in producing from the animals which belong there, rather than exotic introduced animals. Added to this, kangaroos don't produce methane so that kangaroo harvesting is means of producing low emission meat.

Kangaroo management in Australia relies on markets for the products it generates to operate effectively. I urge your government to support efforts to sustainably manage the Australian environment by enable ongoing access for kangaroo products to the Californian market.

Yours sincerely

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