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**WRSA PRESS RELEASE:
AMENDMENT OF DIRECTIONS RELATING TO THE BIODIVERSITY SECTOR**

PRETORIA: 28 July 2020:

Wildlife Ranching South Africa has noted the latest Directions published by the Minister of Environmental Affairs, prohibiting traveling across provincial borders and accommodation on game farms. The subsequent consequences are huge and are devastating to the rural livelihoods, job losses and rural economy. With most hunters traveling from the urban to rural areas, in other words to other provinces to undertake hunts as the most economical way of harvesting, this ban will inevitably result in massive negative effects not only for wildlife ranchers and wildlife, but for the thousands of livelihoods dependent on wildlife ranching activities.

It is important to note that hunting destinations are predominantly in areas with low densities of people with employees staying on the farm permanently and not traveling to and from their workplaces. With the small number of hunters present in a hunting camp at any given time and with the management and hunters adhering to **COVID-19** protocols for safe conduct, the risk of infections is extremely low.

Wildlife management is stipulated within the original set of Disaster Management Regulations as an essential service. In the interest of wildlife management and thousands of workers on game farms, WRSA urges the NCC to allow all wildlife management activities to proceed, including the harvesting of wildlife through hunting. The harvesting of excess wildlife is one of the most important wildlife management tools and mainly takes place during the winter season.

WRSA appreciates the Minister of Environmental Affairs, Minister Barbara Creecy's understanding for the value of hunters sourcing game meat for consumption purposes, but also understands her concern about the spreading of the virus.

The sourcing of own protein by small groups of hunters according to set protocols, should not be confused with a large group of people participating in a leisure activity. Therefore, WRSA requests the approval of interprovincial traveling to take place with the necessary traveling permits as approved by the NCC, with accommodation during subsistence hunting to be allowed, with the necessary COVID-19 protocols to be in place at all times to address any concerns regarding the spreading of the virus.

WRSA hereby requests the urgent re-consideration of these drastic steps to enable the continuation of the rural livelihoods and economy.

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