

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Xavier Becerra:  
Attorney General of California  
1300 "I" Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear General Becerra:

Thank you for your ongoing efforts to protect consumers from harmful and illicit practices and your defense of California's world-leading environmental protection efforts. It has come to our attention that a California criminal statute forbidding imports of skins and other parts of kangaroos is not being carefully observed by some businesses in our state. We write to bring this matter to your attention and request that your office and other relevant agencies alert these vendors to the importance of adhering to the law and take appropriate enforcement action against serial violators. After the fires that raged for weeks and wiped out so much of Australia's wildlife just a few short months ago, we are especially concerned about the additional adverse human impacts resulting from this illegal trade.

California banned the trade in kangaroo parts for good reason. Our citizens do not want kangaroos killed by the million for athletic shoes and other products, especially given the availability of alternative fabrics already widely in use and of equivalent or superior functionality. California Penal Code § 6530 bans the import and sale of kangaroo-derived products among other animal products.

Similar to California, vast areas within Australia get limited rainfall. Like our ecologically diverse state, the continent has a range of biomes, but arid landscapes predominate. This makes the region highly susceptible to wildfires, and that circumstance has been exacerbated by the effects of climate change. The arid climate and the compounding effect of climate change produced a calamitous situation for Australia just months ago. Infernos razed thousands of square miles, leveling what stood in their path and killing animals in astronomical numbers.

The iconic kangaroos and koalas were just a fraction of the millions of animal victims that were affected by what has been described as one of Australia's worst bushfire season on record. We've seen the terrifying effects of life-threatening, community-destroying wildfire in our state on people, habitats, and animals, yet we've never experienced anything on the scale that


Australia did. This conflagration has only added to the extraordinary human pressures on kangaroos.

Every year Australia permits, mainly for export markets, the killing of upwards of two million kangaroos. A recent study from the Center for a Humane Economy has reported that kangaroo killings in Australia's skins trade is mainly driven by the production of kangaroo skin soccer cleats, and California is the largest soccer equipment market in the United States. Among the violations, the Center's investigators found that seven of ten manufacturers of soccer cleats sell their kangaroo models to Californians directly from their websites; and that over 70 businesses, ranging from national chains to smaller stores, sell kangaroo cleats directly to Californians from their brick-and-mortar stores. It appears only a handful of the top 75 online retailers of kangaroo cleats make any kind of effort to prevent sales to Californians. Some of the top manufacturers have been found to either sell kangaroo cleats directly from their stores or deliver to residents in California, both of which are violations of the ban.

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup being co-hosted by the United States and the Rose Bowl scheduled to host games within our state, this is an opportune time to begin enforcement of the ban on kangaroo skin cleats, as it will give businesses sufficient time to purge their inventory of these banned products. These companies have touted their sustainability goals and their commitment to the environment, and it is alarming that they still choose to be associated with this form of wildlife trafficking.

Moving forward, we appreciate your efforts and collaboration with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to make the enforcement of this ban a priority. If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to reach out to us. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



**Salud Carbajal**  
Member of Congress



**Tony Cárdenas**  
Member of Congress



**Ted W. Lieu**  
Member of Congress