



To: **Honorable Members of the Natural Resources Committee**
State Capitol
1445 K St.
Lincoln, NE 68508

Re: **LB 305 – Game and Parks Commission Secretary**

Position: **Oppose**

Date: **February 4, 2021**

Honorable Members of the Natural Resources Committee:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), I ask that you oppose Legislative Bill 305 (LB 305), a bill that would require the secretary of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) to be appointed by the governor, with consent of the legislature, rather than the members of the Game and Parks Commission. We request that this letter be included as part of the public hearing record.

Since 1989, CSF has maintained a singleness of purpose that has guided the organization to become the most respected and trusted sportsmen's organization in the political arena. CSF's mission is to work with Congress, governors, and state legislatures to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting, and trapping. The unique and collective force of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus, and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses, working closely with CSF, and with the support of major hunting, recreational fishing and shooting, and trapping organizations, serves as an unprecedented network of pro-sportsmen elected officials that advance the interests of America's hunters and anglers.

State game commissions, including the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, were established with the dedicated purpose of protecting and conserving wildlife through regulations and sustainable hunting and fishing. As such, a key purpose of these commissions is to ensure that state fish and wildlife management agencies are staffed and led by experts in the wildlife management field. With the secretary serving as both the director and chief conservation officer of the state’s fish and wildlife management agency, it is critical that members of the Commission are able to carefully select the appropriate secretary to prevent political persuasion and to ensure that

management authority over Nebraska's fish and wildlife resources is vested in those best equipped to make appropriate management decisions.

Further, current statute already allows the governor and members of the legislature to play a role in the selection of the secretary through the appointment and confirmation of the members of the Commission. Given the history of conservation successes achieved by the Commission under its current appointment structure, the changes proposed by LB 305 are both unnecessary and potentially dangerous for the future of both Nebraska's wildlife resources and the opportunities these resources afford to the sportsmen and women who most directly support and utilize them.

In conclusion, CSF asks the Committee to oppose LB 305, instead maintaining the current system of a Commission-appointed secretary of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Further, we continue to discourage attempts to allow politics to play a significant role in the operations of state fish and wildlife management agencies to ensure that our nation's fish and wildlife resources are being managed by those who are most qualified to do so. If you have questions or would like any additional information, please feel free to contact me using the information below.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Keene", written in a cursive style.

Kent Keene
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