



March 27, 2023

Representative James Buchanan
Chairman, Agriculture, Conservation & Resiliency Subcommittee
Florida House of Representatives
400 House Office Building
402 South Monroe, Tallahassee, FL 32399

Re: House Joint Resolution 1157; Right to Hunt and Fish

Position: Support with Amendment

Dear Chairman Buchanan and Members of the Committee,

We respectfully encourage you to support House Joint Resolution 1157 which proposes to create Section 28 of Article I of the State Constitution to protect the right to hunt and fish as a public right in perpetuity. Constitutionally safeguarding the right to hunt, fish, and take fish and wildlife is critical to the future of Florida's outdoor heritage, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide input as you consider this important legislation that would enable Florida to become the 24th state to constitutionally guarantee the right to hunt and fish.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

CSF supports HJR 1157 with the following amended language:

SECTION 28. Fishing, hunting, and the taking of fish and wildlife. — Fishing, hunting, and the taking of fish and wildlife, including by the use of traditional methods, shall be preserved forever as a public right and preferred means of responsibly managing and controlling fish and wildlife. This section does not limit the authority granted to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission under Section 9 of Article IV.

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We recommend this language based on our extensive experience working to pass right to hunt and fish constitutional amendments in states across the country and coordinating with the respective state fish and wildlife agencies throughout the process.

HJR 1157, if passed by the legislature, would present voters in the November 2024 elections with the option to vote for a state constitutional amendment that would protect the right to hunt, fish, and take fish and wildlife. CSF, along with other conservation organizations, has supported right to hunt and fish initiatives across the country to ensure that future generations of sportsmen and women can continue to hunt, fish, and take fish and wildlife. Sportsmen and women are the primary funders of state-based conservation, contribute significantly to the economy, and facilitate youth introduction to and appreciation of the outdoors.

State conservation programs for fish and wildlife management, habitat enhancements, and access improvements to public lands and waters are funded largely by sportsmen and women. In 2021 alone, for example, Florida's sportsmen and women contributed approximately \$74 million to conservation funding through the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and sporting-related equipment. Economic contributions related to hunting and fishing are also important as the more than 3.2 million sportsmen and women in Florida are a significant economic force spending more than \$5.9 billion, supporting more than 94,000 jobs, and generating more than \$611 million in state and local taxes. As you consider HJR 1157, we ask you to please take into account the vital importance of protecting Florida's outdoor heritage to the conservation programs and the economy of Florida.

23 states, including every Southern state (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia), have amended their constitution to protect the right to hunt and fish, and we respectfully encourage you to support HJR 1157 to constitutionally protect the right to hunt, fish, and take fish and wildlife in Florida as well.

Attached for reference is our issue brief on Right to Hunt, Fish and Harvest Wildlife. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,



Mark Lance
Southeastern States Senior Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
mlance@congressionalsportsmen.org

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