



To: House Committee on Fish and Game and Marine Resources
107 N Main St
LOB Room 305-307
Concord, NH 03301

Re: House Bill 1148 – An Act Relative to the Fish and Game
Commission

Position: Oppose

Date: February 2, 2024

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Fish and Game and Marine Resources,

My name is Fred Bird, and I am the Northeastern States Assistant Manager for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF), New Hampshire resident sportsman, and prior Fish and Game Commissioner for Strafford County representing over 137,000 constituents. I write to you today in opposition to House Bill 1148 (HB 1148). Of concern, is the proposed amendments changing the nomination process, currently in the hands of county sporting clubs’ boards, and instead vests that power with “participating organizations”. Participating Organization is defined by the proposal in Section III (a) as, “An organization which has specific interests in hunting, fishing, or trapping, or a wildlife or habitat conservation organization organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and which has been registered with the department of state for at least 2 consecutive years.” This change would open the Commission to obstructionist organizations (who would qualify under the proposed language) hostile to the mission of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

Founded in 1989, 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.

Established with the dedicated purpose of protecting and conserving wildlife, game commissions

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have been understandably staffed by experts in the field throughout their existence. Such experts' ability to make responsible and effective decisions regarding wildlife management has become contested through non-sportsmen and women pushing for seats on game commissions. Having Board members that are neutral on the matter, or are even directly opposed to hunting, trapping, and fishing leads to obstructionism which, in turn, will potentially restrict access and opportunity for sportsmen and women. The pressure for non-consumptive seats on game commissions directly threatens the future of conservation. One only needs to look west to states like Oregon and Washington to observe examples of why such changes to commissions/boards become more than problematic. In those states, recent commission decisions have become outright hostile to sound wildlife management, turned conservation doctrine into preservationist goal setting, and, in some cases, commissions have sought to ban the very systems and traditions that fund, maintain, and conserve balanced and healthy habitats.

I respectfully request that the members of this Committee oppose the passage of House Bill 1148 and protect the authority and integrity of the rules and season setting of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department Commission. I appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments and welcome any questions that you may have. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Bird', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Fred Bird
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