



March 26, 2024

Representative David Osborne
Speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives
702 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Re: Senate Bill 3; Restructuring of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Position: Oppose

Dear Speaker Osborne and Members of the Kentucky House of Representatives,

As a lifelong Kentuckian and on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I write to respectfully express CSF's opposition to Senate Bill 3 which would (1) administratively attach the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) to the Department of Agriculture and (2) authorize the Commissioner of Agriculture to appoint all members of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission.

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.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is widely recognized as one of the most successful models of wildlife conservation in the world, and one of its key components is that wildlife harvest is allocated by law, including regulatory decisions made by the KDFWR Commission.

The KDFWR and Commission should primarily serve Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and the sportsmen and women of Kentucky that largely pay for the management of these public trust resources through their purchases of hunting and fishing licenses and the manufacturer-level excise taxes paid on guns, ammunition, fishing tackle, and related equipment - the "user pays – public benefits" American System of Conservation Funding. While the agriculture and sporting

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communities share similar interests, agricultural priorities may conflict with professional, science-based fish and wildlife management.

The iconic conservation success stories of the White-tailed deer, wild turkey, and elk were led and funded by the sportsmen's conservation community. The current KDFWR Commission appointment process, which is not directly tied to business interests, has been successful managing Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources, helping Kentucky become a renowned state for hunting and fishing. No state fish and wildlife agency in the country is attached to their respective state's department of agriculture, as proposed in Senate Bill 3.

Additionally, Senate Bill 3 contains an emergency clause that, if enacted, would allow the Commissioner of Agriculture to immediately begin making appointments to the KDFWR Commission. Currently, five of nine Commission seats are vacant and would therefore be subject to appointment by the Commissioner of Agriculture, potentially leading to an immediate overhaul of the KDFWR Commission favoring agricultural interests.

To ensure that KDFWR and its Commission continue to keep Kentucky's sporting heritage at the forefront and prevent the intrusion of agricultural interests into wildlife management, we respectfully encourage you to oppose Senate Bill 3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Conner Barker".

Conner Barker
Coordinator, Southeastern States
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
1104 Jonestown Lane
Lexington, KY 40517
cbarker@congressionalsportsmen.org