

Meeting Date: August 22, 2019

Agenda Item No. 4G

Agenda Item: Recovering Americas Wildlife Act
(RAWA)

Bureau Chief Approval: _____

Prepared by: Rex Sallabanks, Wildlife Diversity Program Manager

Background:

HR3742, the “Recovering America’s Wildlife Act of 2019”, was introduced into the House of Representatives of the 116th Congress on July 12, 2019. This national, bipartisan legislation is the direct result of a recommendation from the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources. The bill proposes to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to make supplemental funds available for management of fish and wildlife species of greatest conservation need as determined by State fish and wildlife agencies. It recommends that \$1.3 billion in existing revenues from the general U.S. Treasury fund be invested annually in fish and wildlife conservation through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program under the Pittman-Robertson Act. The Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program was created in statute in 2000 to provide funding to states to develop and implement State Wildlife Action Plans to conserve the full array of fish and wildlife, and support wildlife conservation education and wildlife-associated recreation. Without new funding, the existing model puts a disproportionate burden on hunters, recreational shooters, anglers, and boaters, and is insufficient to meet the needs of thousands of species and their associated habitats.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:

Title 36-103 (a), Wildlife Policy, declares all wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within in the state of Idaho to be the property of the state that shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. Title 36-103 (b) authorizes the Commission to administer this Policy. More than 90% of species prioritized as Species of Greatest Conservation Need in the Idaho State Wildlife Action Plan are not hunted, fished, or trapped and receive very limited funding for conservation and management.

Public Involvement Process:

None.

Justification:

State fish and wildlife agencies have a strong track record of conservation success when they have adequate funding. To this end, a new dedicated and sustainable funding mechanism is needed to implement proactive conservation actions for Species of Greatest Conservation Need to maintain healthy, sustainable populations and prevent federal listing under the Endangered Species Act. Such actions would help the Idaho Fish and Game Commission maintain state-led management authority for Idaho’s fish and wildlife.

Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends the Commission adopt the attached resolution supporting the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Action Requested:

Adopt the resolution supporting the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel.

Suggested Motion: I move the Commission adopt the resolution supporting the recommendation of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America’s Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources.