

Arizona Game and Fish Commission [Press Release](#) – March, 2010

The Arizona Game and Fish Commission today urgently asks the public in joining them in opposition to Senate Bill 1200, proposed legislation creating a new appointment recommendation board that would evaluate and control which candidates for commission vacancies the governor could select.

SB 1200 is scheduled to be debated tomorrow and voted on this week in the state senate.

The commission asks people to immediately contact their state senator in opposition to SB 1200 and let them know that House Bill 2619 is a much better solution to an open and fair commission appointment process. Contact your senator now by following this link.

<http://www.azleg.gov/alisStaticPages/HowToContactMember.asp>

The commission expressed concern that SB 1200, if passed by the Arizona Legislature, could threaten the current commission system by granting greater influence to a select group while weakening the public's voice in wildlife management.

"This legislation would lead to, and is intended to lead to, a commission made up entirely of people with similar views, similar backgrounds and similar intentions," said current commission chair Jennifer Martin from Phoenix. "If this bill passes, and the majority of our stakeholders are disenfranchised and most Arizonans are left out, our broad support base that's always waiting in the wings to protect the commission system, if necessary, will disintegrate."

Other commission members voiced concern that the current commission system doesn't need to be changed.

"Such legislation unnecessarily and dangerously polarizes an already delicate political process," said Chino Valley commissioner Norm Freeman. "I don't see a problem that needs to be corrected by legislative action that adds another layer of bureaucracy. "

Freeman said that he supports the great wildlife conservation work of the groups that are supporting this bill who represent approximately 6,000 citizens in Arizona, but he could not support change that grants a greater voice to one special interest group over another.

"The legal duty I undertook when appointed by the governor and confirmed by the senate was to establish policy for the management, preservation, and harvest of wildlife and for watercraft and off-highway vehicle operations in the public trust for the benefit of the citizens of Arizona. I take that to mean all of the approximately 6,500,180 Arizona citizens, not a 6,000 member subset thereof," he said.

Instead of all Arizonan's having an equal voice in the commission selection process, SB 1200 would allow a 6,000 person subset representing less than 2 percent of hunters and anglers to decide commission membership.

As an alternative, the current Arizona Game and Fish Commission supports House Bill 2619.

"HB 2619 provides a better solution for an open and transparent commission appointment process by providing a timeline that needs to be followed and making the list of applicants available for public review," said commission chair Martin.

The Game and Fish Commission is comprised of five members (serving staggered five-year terms) appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. No more than one commissioner may be from any one county. No more than three may be from the same political party.

The commission is the policy-setting board overseeing the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Since its inception in 1929, this organizational structure has served as a buffer for the best interests of science-driven wildlife conservation during eight decades of back-and-forth political change.

To contact your state legislators click here. <http://azleg.gov/MemberRoster.asp?Body=H>

To find out who your legislator is click here. <http://azleg.gov/alisStaticPages/HowToContactMember.asp>

Action is needed now!