

January 11, 2022

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Re: Set a National Example by Filling Vacant Seats on Fish and Wildlife Commission with Appropriate Commissioners

Dear Governor Inslee,

The 22 undersigned conservation organizations from across the nation urge you to immediately fill the vacant seats on the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission. In this moment, we are looking to Washington, waiting for you to make these time-sensitive and vitally important appointments. As it stands, the Commission has not been able to function; you must act now.

Your appointments should understand and value science, work to conserve and protect the environment, be responsive to the broad public interest in wildlife, and look to bring needed reforms to how wildlife is managed in Washington. We are representatives of the wildlife community across the nation that are taking action to reform state wildlife management to be more ecologically-driven, democratic, and compassionate. We write this letter to let you know that the national wildlife advocacy community is keeping a close eye on what is happening in Washington and hoping you will lead the way in transforming state wildlife management in the U.S.

State wildlife management throughout the United States is based on outdated principles and favors special interests over actual wildlife conservation. A primary source of this mismanagement is state wildlife commissions which tend to prioritize management by and for consumptive users despite decreasing numbers of hunters and declining public support. Consumptive users make up nearly 75 percent of all commissioners nationwide, despite accounting for under 15 percent of the total population. In addition, the people of Washington (and the American public) overwhelmingly support prioritizing wildlife protection over hunting or fishing. Governor Inslee, you have an opportunity to set an example to the rest of the nation by appointing commissioners that better reflect the general public and their views on wildlife.

The appointments you make can set the groundwork for the future of how Washington manages its environment and wildlife. Washington's Commission has a history of abandoning its duty to protect the public trust in favor of maintaining outdated management practices and serving entrenched special interests. Furthermore, dysfunction within the Commission has led to the recent resignation of Commissioner Fred Koontz. In his resignation letter, Fred describes a Commission that is "stuck in a politicized quagmire," which has "largely lost the ability to have civil public conversations." You have an opportunity with your appointments to redirect the

Commission towards being ecologically-driven, functional, and more representative of the public as a whole.

You have established yourself as one of the leading governors in the nation on tackling climate change and promoting environmental protection. However, you cannot protect the environment without also protecting wildlife. The world is in the midst of a biodiversity crisis with around one million species at risk of extinction. Action must be taken now. You have a bold environmental agenda and have consistently stated that Washington believes in science. For this reason, it is imperative that you select Commissioners that will support your agenda, value wildlife, and use science to inform their decision making.

We urge you to immediately appoint new Commissioners to the vacant seats who will truly represent the interests of all the people of Washington and who are dedicated to the principles of conservation and scientific integrity.

Sincerely,

Advocates for Snake Preservation

Project Coyote

Animal Wellness Action

Protect Our Wildlife

Center for a Humane Economy

Trap Free Montana

Center for Biological Diversity

Urban Wildlife Rescue Inc

Colorado Voters for Animals

Voices of Wildlife in NH

Endangered Species Coalition

Washington Wildlife First

Madrean Archipelago Wildlife Center

Western Wildlife Conservancy

Nevada Wildlife Alliance

Wildlife for All

NH Wildlife Coalition

Wolves of the Rockies

Plan B to Save Wolves

Wyoming Untrapped

Predator Defense

Wyoming Wildlife Advocates