

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The Commission will be briefed on national efforts to develop additional capacity and funding for state actions to conserve species and habitats of greatest conservation need and to connect their citizens with nature.

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) established the Blue Ribbon Panel on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources in 2014. The 26-member panel is made up of national business and conservation leaders from outdoor recreation, energy industries, automotive industries, private landowners, educational institutions, conservation organizations, sportsmen's groups, and fish and wildlife agencies. It was convened to examine the current system of conservation funding at the federal level and to recommend a new mechanism that will help conserve all fish and wildlife.

The Blue Ribbon Panel is recommending that Congress appropriate \$1.3-billion in federal funding to state fish and wildlife agencies to implement State Wildlife Action Plans. Oregon would receive approximately \$46-million per biennium in new federal funding to support the Oregon Conservation Strategy. Legislation implementing the Panel recommendations was introduced in Congress in July 2016 and will be reintroduced in 2017.

AFWA is requesting that state fish and wildlife commissions and agencies support the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations and associated legislation. The Commission is being asked to approve a resolution supporting the national efforts and encouraging the Oregon Congressional delegation to work towards passage of the legislation.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

AFWA representatives presented information on the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations at a HB 2402 Task Force meeting on March 30, 2016 in Salem. The meeting was open to the public and information was posted on the Oregon Legislative Information System website at <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201511/Committees/JTFFFW/Overview>.

ANALYSIS

The AFWA Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations complement the work of Oregon's Task Force on Funding for Fish, Wildlife and Related Outdoor Recreation and Education established by House Bill 2402. AFWA made a presentation on the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations at a Task Force meeting in Salem on March 30, 2016.

The Task Force supports the national efforts; however, it did not consider potential federal funding when developing its recommendations because of uncertainty surrounding Congressional approval of the legislation. Rather, the Task Force recommends the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission support the legislation.

HR 5650 was introduced in the second session of the 114th Congress with bipartisan support. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR) was one of twenty co-sponsors. Although HR 5650 did not advance during the 114th Congress, similar legislation will be introduced in the 115th Congress.

AFWA is requesting that state fish and wildlife commissions and agencies adopt resolutions supporting the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations. AFWA is also recommending states encourage their respective Congressional delegations to support legislation introduced to implement the Panel recommendations. The draft resolution is based on similar measures approved by other state fish and wildlife commissions or organizations and references the recommendations made by Oregon's task force.

Additional financial support – whether through Congressional action, legislative approval of Task Force recommendations, or a combination of the two – would significantly increase Oregon's ability to conserve its native fish and wildlife and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.

OPTIONS

Option 1: Approve the proposed resolution in support of the AFWA Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations.

Option 2: Amend and approve the proposed resolution.

Option 3: Reject the proposed resolution.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the draft resolution supporting the Association of Fish and Wildlife Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations on Sustaining America's Diverse Fish and Wildlife Resources and encouraging the Oregon Congressional delegation support legislation to implement the Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations.

EFFECTIVE DATE

NA