

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Washington State Senate  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee  
416 Sid Snyder Ave, SW  
Olympia, WA 98504

RE: Senate Bill 5675- Support

Dear Chair Van De Wege and members of the Senate Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources and Parks Committee,

The below signed conservation organizations, who represent the interests of hundreds of thousands of outdoor recreation enthusiasts in Washington, are asking for your support for a hearing on Senate Bill 5675 (SB 5675). This bill would enhance the existing Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission nominations process by establishing a Governor-appointed nominations committee. Like in other states, this would add more transparency in the process and help ensure the Governor's office has the best qualified candidates to consider for appointment.

SB 5675 contains three main goals:

- ***Establish a diverse and fair nominating committee process for Commission appointments.*** Under SB 5675, the Governor and Senate Chair of the Natural Resources Committee would establish a well-represented nominating committee, which must include members of the fishing and hunting community, as well as members representing agriculture, outdoor recreation, local communities, and other conservation interests.
- ***Ensure that science is the driver of fish and wildlife management decisions.*** SB 5675 would require that commissioners support science-based management for game, nongame, and fish population and demonstrate that their decisions are based on peer-reviewed science. This requirement is not currently in Commission mandates or duties.
- ***Ensure timely Commission appointments and establish accountability measures for Commissioners.*** Under SB 5675, the Governor and Senate would have 90 days to fill and confirm commission vacancies. It also provides for a removal process if the Governor and Senate find that a Commissioner is not following the current established Commission mandates.

The overall goal of SB 5675 is to create a fair and open process for Commission appointments and ensure that qualified candidates are appointed to this regulatory body. The law already requires the Governor to “maintain a balance reflecting all aspects of fish and wildlife, including representation recommended by organized groups representing sportfishers, commercial fishers, hunters, private landowners, and environmentalists.” SB 5675 helps the Governor with this mandate so that our diverse communities are fully represented by the Commission and science is the primary driver of fish and wildlife management.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions about this bill, please contact Keely Hopkins at Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation at [khopkins@congressionalsportsmen.org](mailto:khopkins@congressionalsportsmen.org) or 916-633-3664, or Matt Little at Ducks Unlimited at [mlittle@ducks.org](mailto:mlittle@ducks.org) or 541-678-2322.

Sincerely,

Larry Phillips  
American Sportfishing Association

Keely Hopkins  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Matt Little  
Ducks Unlimited

Charles Whitwam  
Howl for Wildlife

Torin Miller  
National Deer Association

Russ McDonald  
National Wild Turkey Federation

Dale Magart  
Northeast Washington Wildlife Group

Harley McAllister  
Orion The Hunter's Institute

Alex Baier  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Chris Tymeson  
Safari Club International

Brian Lynn  
Sportsmen's Alliance

Michael O'Casey  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Cameron Lankhaar  
Washington Chapter, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Dan Wilson  
Washington Chapter, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers