



# House Bill 581

## Legislative Review of Wildlife Funding

### Why the legislature needs to review funding?

- Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW) revenue from sale of hunting, trapping and fishing licenses is expected to continue to decline over time
- General Fund (tax money) allocation to make up the difference has increased 400% (1990-2019)
- Both the General Fund and federal wildlife funding are unstable funding sources for DFW
- Both the Association of F & W Agencies and the Vermont DFW have called it a crisis.
- DFW faces the need for stable and increasing funding because:
- Agency responsibilities have grown exponentially over time and will continue to
- More attention must be given to the steadily increasing number of species that are endangered and threatened non-game
- Increased research, monitoring and interventions will be required because of challenges such as climate change, habitat loss, invasive species, pollution

### 581 would address the funding issue

The bill would create a working group of legislators to advise the general assembly regarding the status of wildlife funding

A. The working group will assess:

- a. Changing standards resulting from evolving ecological science and values
- b. Changing environmental trends
- c. Shifting demographic and cultural changes and their impact on funding
- d. Stability of all income streams
- e. Changes to Dept responsibilities and to public expectations
- f. Current allocation and adequacy of resources and increasing need for scientific reporting and permitting
- g. Estimated revenues and other resources need for new and needed programming
- h. Appropriateness of current allocation of DFW resources by customer segment, service types and fee amount

B. The group will recommend how DFW can obtain adequate funding for the next 15 years by considering:

- a. Projected agency costs in light of the above assessment
- b. New, diversified, stable and adequate funding sources to complement, replace and/or expand existing DFW revenues in order to meet expected costs