



**VWC asks that the Committee move H.581
to the General Assembly
for a vote**

There are two primary drivers
of this bill

1. DFW Funding Crisis

2. Wildlife Species
Face Significant, Long Term Threats

There Is an Industry-wide Funding Crisis

“The amount of funds currently available for wildlife conservation is only capable of meeting a small fraction of the need.”

National Wildlife Federation (2018)

There Is a Vermont Funding Crisis

“To remain financially stable long term, the department will need to address its funding crisis.”

DFW Performance Based Budget Report - 2017

“Further drops in licenses would pose a serious financial, administrative and bureaucratic threat.”

DFW spokesperson in *Vermont Digger* - December 29, 2019

There Is Also a Wildlife Crisis

“Yet what is hidden from most Americans is another impending fish and wildlife crisis. For every game species that is thriving, hundreds of nongame species are in decline.... In the coming years, thousands of species could be added to the list of federal threatened and endangered species.”

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (VT DFW is a member)

“As many as one-third of America’s wildlife species are at increased risk of extinction.”

Joint report by National Wildlife Federation,
American Fisheries Society and Wildlife Society (2016)

The Crisis Has
Arrived in Vermont

**“A significant
number of wildlife
species need help.”**

VT's Wildlife Action Plan
2015

976

of SGCN species listed in
Vermont's 2015
Wildlife Action Plan

SGCN: Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Why Is There a Wildlife Crisis?

According to Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan, the causes are:

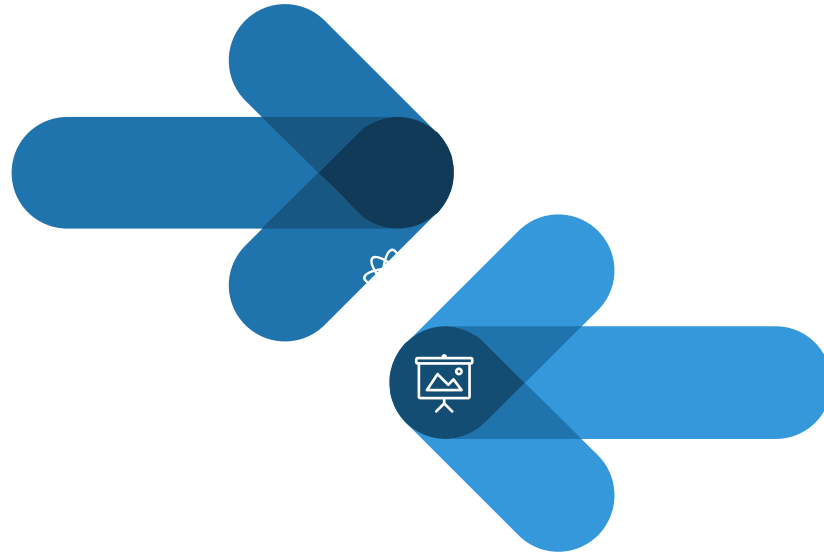
- Climate Change
- Habitat Loss and Fragmentation
- Impacts of Roads and Transportation Systems
- Pollution
- Invasive Species
- Disease

“Given the magnitude of climate impacts, rates of increasing variability, and the synergy between climate and non-climate stressors on wildlife and the habitats upon which they depend, there is an urgent need to prepare for and respond to these impacts.”

Vermont's Wildlife Action Plan

**- The future of our wildlife is in peril -
funding and the capacity to address the emerging threat to wild
species are inexorably and directly connected**

Funding Crisis



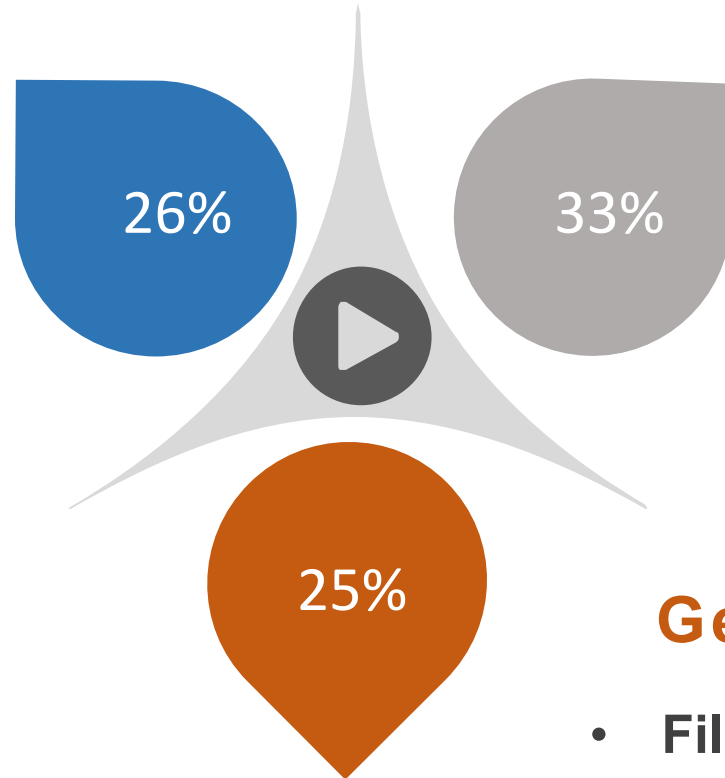
Wildlife Crisis

Current Solutions Are Not Working

License Fees Decreasing

- Since 2005
- Demographic trends
- Social/cultural changes

2021 governor's budget



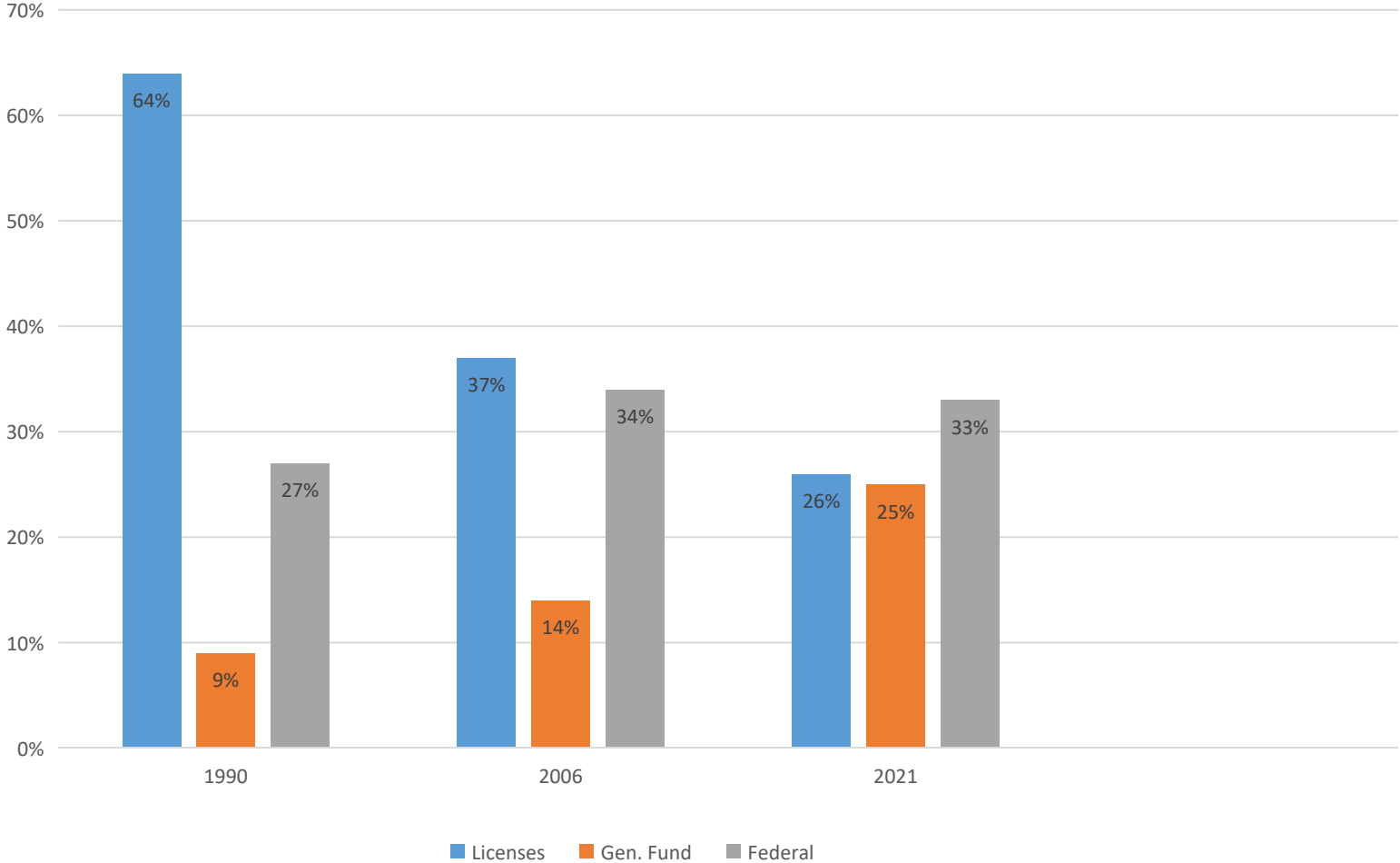
Federal Grants Decreasing

- Requires match from fees
- Politically Unstable

General Fund Increasing

- Filling the gap
- Politically Unstable

Budget Trends: 1990 to 2021



2021 data from governor's projected budget

A Key Weakness of Historical Funding

- 21,000 wildlife species in VT in total (VT WAP)
- About .003% are game/sportfish species (about 70)
- Game species are, with exceptions, not currently threatened
- **Non-game species = more than 99% of SGCN**
- **Non-game species are in crisis in VT and across the U.S.**

Historically, funding has been oriented to game species

SGCN: Species of Greatest Conservation Need

Why a Legislative Working Group?

Only legislators can:

- 1. Step outside of the historical funding mindset and proactively address the crisis**
- 2. Access the expertise and records required to create better funding options**

Funding Must Increase

- **Monitoring and research to protect species will be expensive**
- **Habitat protection will be expensive**
- **Only in the early stages of understanding the impact of invasives and pollution**
- **More species will be threatened over time**
- **The full picture of threats is not yet known**
- **Public demand for DFW services will only increase over time**

Funding Must Be Stable

- **DFW should not be constantly distracted by funding insecurity**
- **Dependable funding supports the DFW's capacity for creating effective solutions**
- **Stable funding also supports Vermonters' quality of life, economy and identity**

Funding Must Be Diversified

“Diversified funding” means:

1. A variety of funding sources (licenses, state, federal and more)

2. Contributions from the broad public

Wildlife watchers, for example, spend \$3 on their avocation for every \$1 hunters spend

3. The Vermont public is willing to contribute

Funding Must Target Contemporary Needs

To establish those needs, the Working Group would:

- 1. Examine current allocations of department resources**
- 2. Evaluate if those allocations make sense in light of current priorities and challenges**
- 3. Recommend funding levels going forward for 15 years**
- 4. Recommend new sources of funding**

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