



## Modernizing Vermont's Wildlife Governance: Support House 582

### Why does wildlife governance need to modernize?

- ✓ Vermont has experienced unprecedented shifts in traditional activities: hunting license sales are down by 56%; trapping is down by 51%; fishing is down by 25%; youth hunting is down by 48%
- ✓ General Fund money necessary to operate the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) has increased by 400%
- ✓ 86% of Vermonters identify as wildlife watchers
- ✓ The DFW has projected that license sales will continue to decline
- ✓ Vermont's wildlife faces significant environmental threats ranging from climate change and exotic invasive species to habitat loss and fragmentation
- ✓ The culture, operations and staffing of the DFW continue to prioritize consumptive uses of wildlife over the diversity of wildlife values held by the citizenry; the Fish and Wildlife Board (FWB) likewise prioritizes wildlife uses over wildlife values

### National profession and industry voices are calling for transformation

- ✓ The Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (VT DFW is a member) has called for agencies to transform in order to remain relevant and protect the resources under their mandate
- ✓ The Journal of Wildlife Management has become a forum for peer-reviewed papers calling for agencies to modernize

### Existing policy defining the DFW and FWB role is seriously outdated

- ✓ Current policy in Section 4081 of Vermont statutes (Title 10, Chapter 103) as written completely ignores modern wildlife governance principles, ecology, the cultural values associated with wildlife, and contemporary environmental conditions and threats

### How would H. 582 address these challenges?

- ✓ The bill would provide standards for decision-making by the Department and Board that reflect 21<sup>st</sup> century thinking about wildlife values and their importance to all Vermonters
- ✓ H. 582 would ensure that diverse perspectives are included in future decision-making about public resources (wildlife) that by law must serve the whole public
- ✓ H. 582 would help ensure that citizen-supported sustainable, ecological, aesthetic, economic and recreational benefits serve as foundations for decision-making and that benefits are allocated to avoid systematically privileging some beneficiaries over others
- ✓ This bill will benefit wildlife watchers, hunters, anglers and all other stakeholders

Vermont Wildlife Coalition

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