

The very premise of a bill to eliminate the current fish and wildlife board is founded in bigotry, classism and discrimination. Privileged anti-hunters, and anti-trappers have the time and money to be in the state house all the time and hire high priced lobbyist. It is unfortunate that this legislature seeks to destroy what a previous legislature created in such a thoughtful manner. The legislature in the late 60s realized that they had been doing a terrible job of managing the herd and other fish and wildlife related issues. They wisely created a board that represented all corners of the state with people who spent time out in nature fishing, hunting, trapping and observing wildlife. I would challenge the committee to stop in at any automotive, truck, heavy equipment, or farm machinery workshop and ask the people who work there if they support this legislation. You will find little if any support for the disposal of the fish and wildlife board. I would challenge you to stop by any construction site and talk to the carpenters, electricians, plumbers, masons, excavators, and all the other trades people on the project. You would find little if any support for the disposal of the fish and wildlife board. These people do not have the time to spend in the state house lobbying for their rights. They do not have the money to hire expensive lobbyist. The majority of sportsman are working class or working poor. The people who are pushing for this change are largely privileged white people. It is a clear example of discrimination and classism of people they do not respect. The people who are pushing for this bill have stated that they want to end hunting and trapping.

Nonconsumptive is a meaningless made up word that seeks to make us the other. If you drive a car, use the roads, fly on airplanes or shop in grocery stores your impacts are destroying ecosystems all over the world. Even if you claim to be a vegan or vegetarian, or some such thing you are still supporting the destruction of ecosystems. For every place there is a farm there was a thriving ecosystem before the farmer started growing lettuce and tomatoes for your salad. There is a massive impact to wildlife for all foods that are trucked here from all over the country and all over the world. Every road, bridge, factory and store is built on top of what was once a vibrant ecosystem. The only way to have no negative impact is the dig a hole about 6 feet deep and 3 feet around. Curl up in the bottom of the hole in the fetal position with no clothes on and have someone bury you. I will guarantee that the venison eat that has been harvested on my own farm has far fewer negative impacts on the planet then salads imported from California, Mexico and who knows where else.

Hunting, fishing and trapping are human rights. They are as important to the existence of humanity, as eating, drinking, breathing and procreation. For much of human history, those who could not, or did not hunt were either dependent on those who did, or they were dead. Hunting, fishing and trapping are ingrained in us and are instinctual. The fish and wildlife board has done a good job overseeing Vermont fish and wildlife for many years. Those who seek to replace it have stated publicly that they seek to end all hunting and trapping. Would you put a white supremacist or a neo-Nazi on the social justice committee? Would you put an atheist on the board of a religious organization ?

I have seen the vitriol of the anti's. I have been the target of their lies and misinformation. I would be willing to bet that I do more for wildlife than every person in this room combined. I paid over \$22,000 in property taxes this year for nearly 500 acres of farm and forest land. I planted around 20 acres of wildlife food plots this year and set aside another 20 acres for grassland birds like bobolinks. I have released nearly 100 apple trees. I see deer, bear, turkeys, moose, coyotes, fox, and other animals feeding, beading and hunting in my fields. I have bobolinks, bluebirds, barn swallows, tree swallows, woodcocks and many other birds including several types of raptors and large flocks of snowbirds in winter all living on my farm. My land provides ecosystem services for many Vermonters and I get nothing for it except a ridiculous tax bill. I have seen the anti's post calling hunters knuckle draggers and murders. I have seen them call our children mass murderers in training. These same people want to be on the board.

The department is subject to political appointees. The speakers office and the committee on committees have no connection to F&W issues. That is the very reason that the legislature created the F&W board. To change the structure of a board that is functioning as well as any board in the state would be wrong. It would be one more step toward the cultural genocide of my people.

John Rodgers
West Glover VT

On Feb 19, 2024, at 5:42 PM, John Rodgers <john_rodgers65@icloud.com> wrote