



The Arizona Wildlife Federation (AWF) was recently made aware of possible consideration by the Committee of Natural Resources and Rural Affairs of HB 2235, related to Arizona Game & Fish Commission appointments. It is our understanding the proposed amendment was withdrawn from the agenda prior to the January 23rd meeting of the Committee. We believe there is a good chance this Bill will again be brought before the Committee of Natural Resources and Rural Affairs and feel the members of the Committee should be informed on the position the AWF has taken on this matter.

Upon careful consideration of HB 2235 the Board of Directors of the AWF did vote to oppose HB 2235 based on several concerns.

- 1) While on the surface having stricter qualifications might seem a good idea, this Bill is crafted to fit the agenda of just one segment of Arizona's outdoors enthusiasts.
- 2) The proposed qualifications could prevent the appointment of a "best qualified" candidate, and considering that the Commission makes decisions on many things besides hunting issues, the best-qualified candidate is what we should be seeking.
- 3) As written HB 2235 negates two of the AWF's main objectives of keeping the Arizona Game & Fish Commission and Department free from political or monetary influences.
- 4) Since the wildlife of Arizona are held in Public Trust for all Arizonan's, the decision making processes should be inclusive rather than limited to hunting license holders.
- 5) The manner in which the Bill is written seems reactionary to a temporary political atmosphere, which is poor justification for changing the existing Bill.
- 6) Two of the current Commissioners would not be qualified for appointment under the proposed qualifications, which could create confusion in public perception and lead to unforeseen complications.
- 7) The current tone of the proposed Bill could create a perception of opponents being "anti-hunting" rather than in opposition for a number of valid reasons.
- 8) This proposed Bill fosters division between outdoors enthusiasts, an atmosphere that is not conducive to building consensus among the many user and interest groups in our state in a time when Arizona's wildlife and habitat are facing unprecedented challenges that will require the "best foot forward" from all of us.
- 9) The proposed Bill does not address "reasonable requirements" and was not a product of a collaborative effort from a broad-spectrum of outdoor enthusiasts.

The Arizona Wildlife Federation has a rich historical tradition in Arizona as the state's oldest conservation organization, and was instrumental in the formation of Arizona's Game and Fish Commission and Department. Over the years, we have continued to feel the responsibility of scrutinizing closely any proposed changes in the Commission form of game and fish management or alteration in the Commission appointment processes. Our mission is always to prevent these entities from becoming subject to influences that do not bring about the best decision-making processes for Arizona's wildlife and habitat management.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ryna P. Rock".

Ryna Rock, President

