



ASSOCIATION OF  
PROFESSIONAL BIOLOGY  
*Serving Biology Professionals since 1980*

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12 July 2017

John Horgan  
Premier Designate Province of British Columbia

Andrew Weaver  
Leader of the Green Party of British Columbia

### **Re. Proposed New Wildlife Management Agency for British Columbia**

Dear Premier Horgan and Dr. Weaver,

As the new leadership forming government in BC, the Association of Professional Biology is reaching out to you regarding our concerns that we were neither informed nor consulted regarding the Province's proposed new stand-alone wildlife management agency<sup>1</sup>. The Association of Professional Biology (APB) represents the voice for biology professionals in British Columbia. Our membership is comprised of knowledgeable, experienced and accredited scientists, including those working in the field of wildlife conservation and management.

It is our understanding that this new wildlife group was formed only through consultation with a limited number of organizations whose interests are mainly focused on the harvest or commercial values of a limited range of wildlife species. Our members are also avid hunters and fishers and as such recognize and value the importance of diverse cross-sections of society engaged in wildlife management, including the value of hunting and fishing organizations for conservation biology. However it is important that modern science guides wildlife management decisions and is utilized in the evaluation, improvement, understanding, and objective accountability of the success or failure of policies and measures taken. The profession was created to provide this type of service to the public, and through the College of Applied Biology Act (2002), has formally stipulated professional accountability for stewardship of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems and biological resources within a framework made up of Registered Biology Professionals.

The success of a new provincial wildlife management agency will depend on its ability to represent the diversity of values that our society holds for wildlife, which include inherent values independent of human use. Wildlife management is complex, because wildlife represents diverse values to people, and because species and ecosystems are dynamic. Yet the proposed agency does not appear to have any mandate to address the health and management of the

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<sup>1</sup> British Columbia to increase investment in wildlife management. BC Government News release March 2017.



ecosystems that BC's wildlife depends on, or the management for Species at Risk. Rather, its mandate appears to be the exclusive management of big game and fur-bearing species - wildlife that is harvested to generate revenue for the province and special interests. This approach has been used in places like Oregon State, to the detriment of non-game and endangered species conservation<sup>2</sup>.

The past government indicated it was afraid to manage carnivores like grizzly bears and wolves<sup>3</sup>. How will your new government demonstrate that it takes the public's significant financial investment and trust in sound management of our provincial wildlife resources seriously? We wish to jointly address the barriers to effective and timely decision making around wildlife that presently exist within government. And as part of that, we ask that you involve the people with the knowledge and skills necessary to inform decision-making with reliable science, such as the qualified, accredited and independent wildlife professionals that comprise our membership.

As Biology Professionals we have a responsibility to question the feasibility of any approach that mandates putting private or commercial interests over the public interest in the management of BC's natural resources.

The Association of Professional Biology is eager to discuss how we can move forward on this issue, and we look forward to your response about when that can happen.

Isabelle Houde, RPBio  
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c.c. Tom Ethier – Assistant Deputy Minister for Resource Stewardship Division, FLNRO, Kaaren Lewis – Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Sustainability and Strategic Policy, BC Ministry of Environment, Jennifer Psyllakis – Director, Fish and Wildlife Branch, FLNRO, Ward Trotter - Executive Director, Resource Stewardship Division, FLNRO, Allan Lidstone – Director, Resource Management Objectives Branch, FLNRO

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<sup>2</sup> Wildlife Neglected: To Fund Conservation, Oregon Hopes To Succeed Where Past Efforts Failed. Oregon Public Broadcasting. November 2016

<sup>3</sup> "Government is afraid to manage wolves, for example, or afraid to manage grizzly bears in some cases because of the politics of that," then Energy and Mines minister Bill Bennett, an avid hunter and supporter of the controversial grizzly bear trophy hunt, told an East Kootenay radio station (<http://www.summit107.com/news/east-kootenay-news/newindependent-wildlife-group-to-take-over-bc-government-operations/>).