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Resolution 2001-01-02 Wildlife Management Ballot Initiatives

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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Resolution 2001-01-02

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BALLOT INITIATIVES

WHEREAS, the authority of the several States to protect and manage fish and resident wildlife found within state borders is an essential attribute of state sovereignty; and

WHEREAS, state authority to protect and manage fish and resident wildlife and to establish means and methods of take has been vested by law in each state in a fish and wildlife agency or agencies which employ professionals trained and experienced in science-based management of fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, despite ample opportunity available to the interested public to participate in the development of state fish and wildlife agency policy and rules through public procedure, in ballot initiative states that device is increasingly being employed to establish state policy in wildlife management; and

WHEREAS, constraints imposed by such ballot initiatives are often antithetical to the need for flexibility inherent in managing dynamic, renewable resources, the very reason why such resources are managed by an administrative agency rather than the legislature itself; and

WHEREAS, constraints imposed by ballot initiatives have resulted in overpopulation of some species creating human safety problems as well as ecological impacts and economic harm; and

WHEREAS, despite the existence in state wildlife agencies of expert knowledge and experience derived in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities, in some states fish and wildlife agency personnel are prohibited from public comment on pending state ballot initiatives such that information before the public is too often provided by special pleaders.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the IAFWA supports state legislation authorizing a state fish and wildlife agency to assess and make available for the benefit of the public the potential human safety, ecological and economic impacts of any ballot initiative placed before the voters intended to affect protection and management of fish or wildlife within the state.