



New Hampshire Firearms Coalition

NH's Only No-Compromise Gun Rights Organization

March 27, 2017

ORIGINAL SENT VIA EMAIL TO: HouseFishandGameCommittee@leg.state.nh.us

Dear Members of the House Fish and Game and Marine Resources Committee,

Tomorrow, you will be asked to consider SB 48, AN ACT establishing a commission to study the efficiency and effectiveness of the fish and game department's operations, governance, and management structure.

The New Hampshire Firearms Coalition strongly supports this bill and I am urging you in the strongest possible language to vote SB 48 "ought to pass" with the amendment described below.

The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is broken. Fees are rising and participation in hunting and fishing is on the decline. Instead of looking within and without for solutions to arrest the decline, the Department and the Commission have merely raised fees on the small number of remaining hunters and fishers. Thus, creating a further decline. The Commission has failed in its statutory purpose of being the citizens' representatives. supervising the department.

Furthermore, even though R.S.A. 206:4a mandates that the Commission:

"Establishment of positions on proposed legislation that affects fish, wildlife, and marine resources and the overall management of the fish and game department. "

The current Fish and Game Commission has built up a lot of ill will by taking positions opposing legislation, such as the recently enacted SB 12 Constitutional Carry. Legislation that has absolutely nothing to do with "fish, wildlife, and marine resources and the overall management of the fish and game department."

It is time for a new way of thinking. **In fact it is time for new management of the department.** SB 48 merely creates a commission to study these issues that *"shall report its findings and recommendations for proposed legislation to the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the senate clerk, the house clerk, the governor, the chairperson of the house fish and game and marine resources committee, the chairperson of the senate energy and natural resources committee, and the state library on or before January 1, 2018."*

If hunting, fishing and firearms ownership are to survive in New Hampshire the status quo at the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department must end. We cannot continue to have a state agency actively working against Second Amendment Civil rights. Nor can we have a Fish and

Game Commission that does not diligently fulfill its statutory obligations as the "as the citizens' representatives".

The Study Commission proposed in SB 48 is a terrific idea. However, the membership of the Commission MUST be restricted to those who actually go into the fields and streams of New Hampshire to take wild game. There are several so called animal lovers who are working undercover and whose goal is to dismantle the Department. We do not want to and will not support dismantling of the Fish and Game Department. **We do support true reform. This is why we are asking for an amendment to SB 48 which will stipulate that the qualifications listed in R.S.A. 206:2-a for Fish and Game Commissioners, also apply to members of the Study Commission created by SB 48; in addition to the other requirements contained in SB 48. The New Hampshire Firearms Coalition believes that only those who actually wish to hunt or fish should have any say in the review of the Department.**

I have received numerous reports of people who were exiting the woods and were approached by a Conservation Officer asking to see a hunting license. In their haste to comply, our hunters place a rifle or shotgun in the bed of a pickup truck or the trunk of a car without unloading it or removing the magazine. They did this to free their hands to show the Conservation Officer their hunting license. Their reward for cooperation: A ticket for a "loaded rifle in or on a vehicle". Others have told me that they have been told by Conservation Officers if they are carrying a firearm, any firearm, in the woods, that is prima facia evidence of poaching or intent to poach.

The Second Amendment does not end at the woodline. There are no laws that prohibit carrying handguns, rifles or shotguns in the woods. There are laws against hunting out of season or without a license. The mere possession of a firearm for self defense does not mean a person is unlawfully taking wild game. This attitude must end. At once. If enacted into law, hopefully SB 48 will help to stop these abuses. Others have told me that Conservation Officers make a habit out of prosecuting those citizens who generally do not have the resources to mount a vigorous defense. When someone is able to retain competent counsel, the charges, which in most cases are violations, are usually dismissed. I thought that all people were equal under the law?

Please vote SB 48 "ought to pass" with the amendment proposed above.

Thanks for your kind consideration.

Very truly yours,



Alan M. Rice
Vice President & Training Director