

From: Mike Covey
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 11:59 AM
Subject: [External] Testimony on H.581

Madam Chair and Committee Members,

A few thoughts on H.581.

Members of the sporting community always pay, and often advocate for their own fee increases as they did last year. That cannot be overstated. The sporting community covers 70-80% of the funding for all department functions. This includes administrative, law enforcement, non game and threatened and endangered species work, habitat work, and unfunded mandates such as Act 250 work.

The concept of toxicity in the relationship between the Fish and Wildlife Department and the general public is purely a construct of a small, motivated group of individuals who are dedicated to damaging that relationship. Catering to these folks in their efforts to diminish and devalue the hunting community through false narratives and reduced opportunities can only be construed as a pointed decision to ignore the value and contributions of the sporting community to the wildlife, landscape, and citizenry of Vermont.

If this committee wants to improve funding for Fish and Wildlife, the answer is in providing dedicated funds to increase outreach and recruitment of hunters, trappers, and anglers. The passive approach of catering to perceived demographic shift by shutting out sportsmen and women is counterproductive and counterintuitive. Recruitment is the answer.

My Best Regards,

Mike Covey
Executive Director
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