



Fish and Wildlife Commission Presentation Summary Sheet

Meeting date:

12/15/2023

Agenda item:

A petition that asks the commission to begin rule making for the return of the Washington State Spring Black Bear hunting season.

Presenter(s):

Anis Aoude, Game Division Manager, Wildlife Program.

Background summary:

In this petition dated October 31, 2023, the petitioner is asking for rulemaking for the return of spring black bear hunting seasons and asserts that the commission was aware that department staff indicated there were enough bears to have a spring bear hunt. He bases that assertion on one commissioner's comments during the October 28, 2023, Commission meeting. The petitioner concludes that this comment does not align with RCW 77.04.012 related to maximizing hunting opportunity. Commissioners have the task of considering biological, social, and financial information when making decisions. The decisions they make as a body reflects that consideration. Regardless of one commissioner's comments, the fact remains that the Commission voted to affirm a motion on November 18, 2022, that informed Department staff and the public that the Commission will not adopt recreational hunting of black bear in Spring. Unless and until this decision changes through new commission direction, Department staff deem it inappropriate to consider a season that would go against the Commission's policy direction.

Staff recommendation:

Department staff recommend denying this petition.

Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

If this petition is denied no rulemaking will take place to contemplate future spring black bear hunting seasons.

Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:

The fiscal impact of this decision is minimal and is not different from the status quo, based on commission direction.

Public involvement process used and what you learned:

The public were given notice of this petition through the commission agenda and had an opportunity to submit written comment. There was no public involvement directly related to this petition prior to its submission. A public engagement process will occur if rule making occurs in the future.

Action requested and/or proposed next steps:

Dependent on Commission decision.

Draft motion language:

I move we deny this petition.

Post decision communications plan:

Communicate the outcome of the Commission's decision to the petitioner.
