



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HJR 55		DATE: 2/22/2021	
COMMITTEE: Conservation and Natural Resources			
TESTIFYING: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ALLEN MORRIS		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: horntagger2010@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 7:37 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55 June of 2019 – Conservation Commission Meeting The Conservation Commission is so limited and small when the last two commissioner left June of 2019 at 2 hour 39 minute mark on video - Barry Orscheln and Don Bedell had to nominate each other to serve as Chairman and the other to serve as Vice Chair and Secretary then they both voted on it. <https://livestream.com/mdc/events/8724279/videos/193118110> Per the MDC - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) administers hundreds of parcels of land in all counties of the state. ... The department has divided the counties of the state into eight administrative regions for the purpose of managing these lands and providing conservation services to the citizens of the state. Why would you not have a Conservation Commissioner that represents the Missouri Citizens and Landowners for each of those Eight Administrative Regions? • Per the MDC - (New position created) December of 2019 – MDC eight regions across the state and each region will be led by a regional administrator. All eight regional administrators report directly the assistant deputy of resource management in Jefferson City to ensure regional operations also remain coordinated at the statewide level. Regional administrators will transition into their new role in December with the final organizational roadmap completed by July 1, 2020. Why would you not have a Conservation Commissioner that represents the Missouri Citizens and Landowners for each of those Eight Administrative Regions? • Per the MDC - These regional changes are part of the Department's larger organizational roadmap for the future to build on the success we've had over the last 80 years in delivering on our conservation priorities and serving the citizens of Missouri," says MDC Director Sara Parker Pauley. "We also need to be able to adapt as quickly as the world is changing around us, including successfully tackling increasing natural-resource challenges and a decreasing connection to nature by people of all ages." Why would you not have a Conservation Commissioner that represents the Missouri Citizens and Landowners able that to adapt quickly to each region changes, including successfully tackling the increasing natural-resource challenges that only exist in that region and be able to connect to citizens for each of all ages those Eight Administrative Regions? Northwest, Northeast, Kansas City, Central, Saint Louis, Southwest, Ozark, Southeast Each of these regions contain wildlife and habitats, that may or may not exist in other regions that the citizens of Missouri live with every day. Nutria Rats in Southeast Region, Elk in the Ozark and Southeast Regions. Wild Horses Ozark Region Wild Hogs Southern Missouri Black Bears Southern Missouri Mule Deer Northeast Region, High Density of Whitetails in Northern Missouri Low Density of Wild Turkeys in Southern Missouri Gray Wolf coming from particularly Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Michigan. Mountain Lion Sightings in Ozark and Southeast Regions Armadillo population explosion throughout Southern Missouri Expanding North Swamp Rabbit decline in Southeast Region Grouse in the East-Central Regions of Missouri Prairies of Northern Missouri and the Million of acres of Forest in Southern Missouri Northwest, Northeast, Kansas City, Central, Saint Louis, Southwest, Ozark, Southeast Individuals across Missouri live a lifestyle of hunting,

fishing, trapping and improving habitat for wildlife exist across Missouri and Missouri is 93% private land. These individuals belong to conservation groups and the amount of money they have raised and how they put it back into the region. Individuals that belong to more than one group or have in the past. How they support kids in the Outdoors, the disabled hunters and women in the outdoors. Habitat improvements they have made. Not county the individual ways they may support wildlife and the conservation efforts in each region. Even Conservation Groups Board Members come from the different regions of Missouri the National Wild Turkey Federation, National Trappers Association. Examples of this exist across Missouri that believes in the Hunting, Trapping, Fishing Heritage and Steward of Wildlife in Missouri. This is just one individual in Missouri in one Region of Missouri that is more than qualified. Example of one Person that believe in the Hunting and Trapping heritage of Missouri: Proud member of past and present of over 30 different conservation groups. Donating both my time and money, Certificate in the Master Wildlifer Program, Certificate in Deer Steward 1, 2 & 3 and Predator Management, Optics Field Technician, Imagery Specialist for the largest retailer in the world - Researching Fur, Fin, Feather and the Historical Hunting Tradition for each region of the country for each new store going in. Working with Directors, Biologist and Staff of Game and Fish Departments throughout the country, to celebrating the Hunting Heritage and conservation message for that state, Sportsmen Radio Show host, Land Management Editor, National Wild Turkey Federation Habitat Pro-Staffer, Guest Speaker at Conservation Events, Freelance Outdoor Writer and Photographer, Outdoor Columnist for several Missouri newspapers, Committee Member for local and state conservation groups, Official Measurer for deer, I am sure the lobby groups will be in attendance today since they have been paid to be here with Tax Money from the MDC as Vendor payments. That's why with the decline of quail, 18 year decline of wild turkey, etc etc they never speak against the MDC the silence has been bought, until they need them to talk.

Fiscal Year	Vendor Name	Payments
Total 2018	MFA INC	\$35,000.00
2012	CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MO	\$165,000.00
2013	CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MO	\$50,000.00
2014	CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MO	\$50,000.00
2016	MISSOURI CONSERVATION	\$51,647.00
2017	MISSOURI FARMERS CARE	\$5,000.00
2018	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$80,000.00
2013	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$130,000.00
2015	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$40,000.00
2016	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$172,500.00
2017	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$216,250.00
2018	MISSOURI FOREST PRODUCTS ASSN	\$116,250.00
2012	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$44,000.00
2013	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$34,000.00
2014	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$33,981.34
2015	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$32,836.80
2016	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$78,827.08
2017	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$44,000.00
2018	NATIONAL WILD TURKEY	\$119,000.00
2012	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$6,000.00
2013	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$15,000.00
2014	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$20,110.95
2015	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$48,705.97
2016	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$72,440.52
2017	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$49,205.18
2018	QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE	\$72,794.82



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. AC "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVO		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: arniedienoff@yahoo.com		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 1:55 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

I am in Support of this Bill. I believe that Conservation Commissioners shall be Elected from throughout the State to represent all areas of Missouri on a Non-Partisan Basis. I believe in this expansion of the Commission and Accountability to our Citizens



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: DOUG ENYART		PHONE NUMBER: 573-429-7800	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CLEARWATER FOREST CONSULTANTS, LLC		TITLE: OWNER	
ADDRESS: PO BOX 176/105 N MAIN ST			
CITY: PIEDMONT		STATE: MO	ZIP: 63957
EMAIL: doug.enyart@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 2:47 PM
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I strongly support this legislation and the concomitant change to our state constitution and the functional changes to the Conservation Commission to the benefit of Missouri landowners. For too long a small cadre has controlled the Commission selected not by their capacity to represent the citizens of the state, but for who they are and their connections. Rural Missouri has never been adequately represented on the Commission, yet it is in rural Missouri where the land the Commission owns is located. This bill is one good step forward in remedying that situation.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: JUDY COOVERT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: jcoovert@wildblue.net		ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2021 9:11 AM
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I support this bill			



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: LARRY SATTERTHWAITE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: longrifle46@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2021 1:06 PM
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I am in support of the bill to replace the current appointed conservation commissioners with commissioners elected by the people of the state. I truly believe the citizens of Missouri would be better served by elected commissioners rather than the ones appointed by the governor. The Conservation department should be operated like the other departments of the state and be answerable to the state legislature. The representatives and senators are elected to represent the people interest and their decisions should be binding on ALL the departments.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MISSI FERGUSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: missiferguson91@aol.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2021 7:33 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD W MCKIE		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: rmckie7@comcast.net	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 3:58 PM

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Let the people decide! Should we not have input into what happens conservationally in our state? We are a free state.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RICK THOMPSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: skinner4418@windstream.net	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 6:04 AM
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I'm in support of this bill. Missouri is a very diverse state in many ways. I feel we need better representation in the Commission . By expanding the commission areas of the state that get over looked could be better served. The commissioners are unapproachable to the public at this time. The changes would give the citizens of Missouri Representation for the region they live in and someone to voice concerns or make suggestions to better serve their area.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ROBERT COOVERT		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: coovert@wildblue.net	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/21/2021 9:11 AM
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I support this bill.			



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ROBERT ELDER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: robb6925@yahoo.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/20/2021 7:57 PM
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Chairman members of the comity please accept this as my official testimony! If I'm not mistaken this bill or ones similar have been brought to comity many times I believe it's time to give serious consideration to pass this bill ! The conservation Comissioner members seem to have a history of family and friend appointments ! Although this is common practice in many states ! However just from those I come in contact with in daily conversation when MDC comes up there is a more and more unhappy citizens with not having a voice in the decision being made by the organization! Let me clarify I LOVE conversation ! Citizens are frustrated with the lack of transparency And double standards ! Anytime people have these feelings towards any organization or even a company they loose trust that their best interests aren't being Followed ! I believe this bill would help citizens feel as if they have a say so in how our taxpayers money is spent ! This bill would help represent more Missourians through a duly elected representative ! I'm sure part of the argument will be they need to have a degree in wildlife biology? A degree doesn't disqualify or qualify anyone from anything ! Something that really seems to be in short supply is common sense ! Education is great people are what's important ! And far to many citizens feel they have no voice ! Or a seat at the table ! We all care about what is important to us ! Even though many in the conversation department boast of having the best and model state for conservation ! When you believe your the best then how can you move forward ! ! You can go forward by going back with honesty integrity and a will do do what's best for all of its citizens not a select few ! Thanks and have a blessed day !



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STEVEN GILLASPY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: steven.gillaspy@bnsf.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/18/2021 8:38 PM
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I support this bill			



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: BRIAN NOWOTNY		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: durango@teuton.org	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2021 4:33 PM
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This is a terrible idea. Why would the Missouri Legislature attempt to fix a problem that does not exist? Why would the Missouri Legislature think it is smart to have more elected partisan officials, such as yourselves, and not fewer? How much more big government does the Missouri Legislature want? The Missouri Department of Conservation is well run, smart with our tax dollars, serves a vital function protecting our natural resources, and is one of the best sources for development and education of our young people in the entire State. MDC is a model agency for the nation. Drop this wrong-headed, ill conceived legislative fiasco like a hot biscuit.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: COLTON ZIRKLE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2322	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MISSOURI		TITLE: EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION	
ADDRESS: 728 WEST MAIN STREET			
CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65101
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DAN ZEKOR		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: drokez@outlook.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/20/2021 10:26 AM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.			

Historically, the Conservation Commission has demonstrated a high level of competence and integrity; not influenced by money, contributions, special interests or an overt desire to be re-appointed. Over its 85-year history, the Commission has performed extremely well, making many informed decisions regarding the management and use of Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife resources statewide, while providing citizens countless services and opportunities. This HJR, if successful, it will serve to politicize Commission decision-making in a way contrary to the intent of those who worked to create the Commission in 1936 and the voters who approved its creation. It also ignores the strong and longstanding support of the state's citizens for the apolitical treatment of decisions pertaining to the management and use of fish, wildlife, and forestry resources of Missouri. Expanding the Size of the Commission The size of the Commission was originally and deliberately set at four. The primary reason cited included the desire to respond quickly on matters of importance, recognizing that a large Commission would make this more difficult. However, this decision was also made under the guiding tenet of minimizing the influence of politics on Commission decision-making. The founders understood that even with the safe guards of staggered terms and limits on political party affiliation, each additional member increases the opportunity for a Governor to load a Commission with his/her people, incrementally increasing the likelihood of politically-based decision-making. While minimizing political influences on fish and wildlife was the primary goal, extracting politics completely is impossible. Under the existing model, the most obtrusive possibility for introducing politics directly into conservation occurs at the time of gubernatorial appointment. The State Constitution does provide some guidance as to the qualifications needed to serve as Commissioner, but gubernatorial appointments are typically treated as political reward, and the Conservation Commission appointment has always been highly desired. During the time that I have personally observed the workings of the Conservation Commission (34 years), this body, in spite of background or political leanings, has worked extremely well as a governing unit and has only added to the legacy of Missouri having the best overall conservation model in the nation! Regionalizing the Commission The Commission's work is driven primarily by the need to promote conservation, with due consideration of public opinion and desires, and to a much lesser degree, political opinion. To this end, most decisions by the Commission regarding regulations, policy, and public use of the State's fish, forest, and wildlife are not or should not be based on geographic locations unless critical to conservation of resources or providing public service and opportunities. Regionalization of Commissioners creates a nightmare scenario that will introduce an extraordinary amount of politics and confusion, thereby corrupting a wonderfully simple and relatively precise system of agency governance. Consider the following: Regional commissioners immediately create a narrow constituency base, thereby diluting, dividing, and potentially undermining agency decision making – The expectation when managing public trust resources (i.e., fish and wildlife, public lands) is that Commission decisions will be made 1) with the broad consideration as to

what is best for the conservation of those resources, and 2) based upon what is best for the people with two caveats: (a) decisions should favor preserving options for future generations, and (b) the ultimate fate of the resources shall be determined only by an informed citizenry. Whether it be the "folks back home" or a special interest group dominant to their region, the focus of individual commissioners will naturally become narrow and political battles will ensue within the group meant to see the big-picture. Regionalizing Commissioners increases the likelihood that conservation programs, projects, and spending will be more regionally based – Feeling the expectations of their constituents, commissioners will work to satisfy those expectations, leading to deal-making among commissioners and possibly facilitating pork-barrel projects and spending. Generally, the most detrimental result is that the regional focus becomes the dominant mindset, displacing the more desirable need to give statewide perspective first. Regional Commissioners will contribute to organizational disruptions – Regional Commissioners will begin to behave like regional directors, working with or against regional staff, thereby diminishing the ability of the agency Director or even the entire Commission to impose necessary, broader work and budgetary priorities on a day-to-day basis. In other words, internal decisions will be influenced by internal and external politics. Creating sub-governmental units with significant power can lead to fiefdoms that can erode typical executive structures. In addition, those regions that have stronger Commissioners, more influential citizens, and/or aggressive staff tend to leverage their abilities at the expense of other programs and parts of the state. Linking Commissioners to existing regions ties the hands of the Department – Regional Commissioners make it more difficult to modify the number and boundaries of regions in the future if needed or desired. Fundamentally, the existing regions were created primarily for administrative expedience based loosely on eco-regions, population centers, and deployment of existing staff offices. In the future, there may be a need to reconfigure these regions. Linking commissioners to existing regions would make it more difficult to implement modifications. Conclusion In my opinion, there are no compelling reasons for changing the size and composition of the Conservation Commission, or its authority, or its funding. Moreover, it was the people that created the Commission by initiative petition, and if the people feel the need for change, they should be the body that initiates that change, not a small group of legislators and/or special interest groups. We have the best model for conservation in the entire nation. With a few rare exceptions, nearly every other state would love to have this model, yet it seems every year someone in the legislature wants to tear it down. Frequently these proposals are brought forth in the name of accountability, but in reality, they are all about the desire to exert needless pressure and control over an agency that has historically proven itself to be effective. One last point, of all the priority issues that face our state, issues of significance to our citizens, issues worthy of legislative time, this is not one of them; nor would it be worth the cost to taxpayers to put such an item on the ballot. In the absence of any major failures in this system of governance, I see no need to make any of the changes proposed in this HJR; therefore, I am opposed to this bill and urge you to once again, please, put this issue to rest. Respectfully, Daniel Zekor 10151 S Bartle Lane Columbia, MO 65201



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DARREN C. HAVERSTICK		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: dchaverstick@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/19/2021 2:35 PM
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I strongly oppose this bill on the grounds that it intentionally injects politics into a region of our government that has been pretty much apolitical since its inception 85 years ago. There are no compelling reasons to adopt the measures put forth in this bill. It is merely an attempt to legislate something that does not need to be legislated.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: DEBRA A FILLA		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: dafilla@attglobal.net	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 9:49 AM
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Missouri is a leader in conservation. Our children were born in MO, we graduated from MO colleges and we fish at Bennett Springs regularly. Please do not fix what is not broken by changing the governance that is in place and working.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: ELIZABETH ALM		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL: elizabethalm8@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 10:40 AM
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The original intent of the Conservation Commission was to allow for the management and protection of fish, forest, wildlife in a process SEPARATE from politics. Electing Commissioners is the exact OPPOSITE of what we the people intended for conservation in this state. We are extremely fortunate to have a citizen based conservation system in MO. HJR55 can only complicate the work and mission of an 80 year old Conservation strategy that is a hallmark of our state.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: GARY GATES		PHONE NUMBER: 573-636-0445	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI PARK AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION		TITLE: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	
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CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65109
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On behalf of the 2000+ members of the Missouri Park and Recreation Association, we wish to record our opposition to HJR55. For nearly 85 years MDC has operated the nations premier conservation program, the envy of most states. The current composition of the Conservation Commission is the primary reason for the departments success. It is not broke and does not need fixing. Respectfully submitted by Gary Gates, Executive Director, Missouri Park and Recreation Association



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TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES			
WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: KYLE WATKINSON		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 12:00 AM
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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: MARK E. FLASPOHLER		PHONE NUMBER: 573-356-1146	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: DUCKS UNLIMITED		TITLE: DIRECTOR OF CONSERVATION PROGRAMS	
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CITY: HARTSBURG		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65039
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Ducks Unlimited Testimony HJR 55 Missouri Conservation Commission Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Mark Flaspohler and I am representing Ducks Unlimited, an organization comprised of 20,000 DU members and volunteers across our great state. DU is a non-profit wetlands conservation organization. We have conserved more than 119,084 acres in Missouri, working with great partners such as the Missouri Department of Conservation. In DU's 84-year history, we have worked with all 50 states, each Canadian province, Mexican states south of the border, and several federal agencies. Each of those professional agencies has unique organizational structures and funding mechanisms, but I am here to tell you that Missouri has been the envy of most of those states. Why is Missouri so admired and modeled after? First, the structure of our Department and its Commission has worked extremely well for 84 years – it has stood the test of time and proven itself. Established in our Constitution, the four Commissioners, balanced by party with staggered terms, have provided the broad base, inclusive oversight that our state natural resources require, and that represents all citizens extremely well. Secondly, a critically important component in our structure is that each commissioner represents the entire state. This ensures the Commission is managing the “forest” instead of individual “trees”, which is an essential viewpoint if we are to manage our statewide resources. One just needs to look at our neighboring states to see the problems and issues from regional representation. That system pits portions of a state against each other, creating division and fragmentation – something our precious resources do not need at this point. Our current system provides a holistic conservation vision that we need to manage effectively for the benefit of all citizens and has a track record of 84 years of success. Thirdly, our current commission structure has been and continues to be guided and directed by sound science. This foundational platform is as essential now as when it was established in 1936, when conservation giants Ding Darling and Aldo Leopold helped form this system. Strong science applied to statewide resources is the main reason our fish and wildlife populations and outdoor recreation opportunities are healthy and abundant. Ducks Unlimited has been around 84 years, just like the Missouri Department of Conservation and its Commission. Yes, during our past we have changed some elements of our business. But we have never changed our mission - our singleness of purpose - in conserving habitat for North American waterfowl. The reason why we haven't changed our mission is because it works, and works well. I would contend with each of you that Missouri's Conservation Commission works extremely well; it has for 84 years and should continue for 84 more years. Simply said, if it is not broke, don't fix it. DU appreciates the opportunity to present our testimony to the committee. DU urges you to vote no on HJR 55. In summary, DU supports the current structure and function of the Missouri Conservation Commission, and sees no reason to make any alterations to a system of fish and wildlife management that is world class. Thank you.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MARK ZURBRICK		PHONE NUMBER:	
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Committee Members, As life-long Missourian, I thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in Opposition to HJR 55. Apparently, the bill's sponsor disagrees with the Missouri Department of Conservation's (MDC) management of our forests, fish, and wildlife, and believes that the Conservation Commission (CC) is somehow "broken" and that Article IV, Section 40, of the Missouri Constitution needs "fixing". HJR 55's misguided "fixes" include, more than doubling the number of commissioners, requiring prospective commissioners to reside in a particular geographic region, and most troubling, the elimination of the requirement that the commission be evenly balanced as to political party affiliation. Please allow me to address these three issues separately.

Number of Members The bill's sponsor obviously believes that a four-person commission is too small. Yet one in five of Missouri's two hundred plus commissions, councils, or boards have four or fewer appointed members. If the sponsor believes that "more is better", why not propose legislation mandating an increase in the number of appointees to more than 40 other bodies, such as the Labor and Industrial Relations and State Tax Commissions? Can the sponsor provide any non-biased evidence that decisions made by eight people guarantees better outcomes than those made by four people? In past attacks on the MDC, the bill's sponsor has referred to the agency as an "overgrown bureaucracy". How would HJR 55, calling for more than doubling of the size of the CC, be in harmony with the large number of citizens and legislators calling for smaller, rather than larger government?

Geographic Residency Conservation commissioners should be chosen based on who is best qualified for the job, rather than where they live. The Clean Water, Tourism, State Lottery, Highway and Transportation Commissions, and the Veterinary Medical and State Park Advisory Boards are just a few examples of nearly 85% of all appointed governing and advisory bodies that have no stipulation on where a member must reside in order to serve the citizens of the state. Why should the CC be singled out and treated differently? The sponsor is proposing that the residency requirements mirror the MDC management regions based on natural resource management goals and objectives, rather than established political subdivisions based the distribution of the state's citizens. HJR 55 would invalidate the equal representation "one person-one vote," principle found in the United States Constitution that unambiguously states that each citizen's vote must have equal value and election districts must have equal populations. Unlike Missouri House and Senate districts with boundaries that provide for equal representation for every citizen, HJR 55 would create unequal representation, resulting in the disenfranchisement of citizens and would encourage divisive regionalism. For example, MDC's 15-county Northeast Region contains less than 3% of the state's citizens, yet the commissioner elected to represent the NW region would represent about 12% of the CC's eight elected members when voting, thus violating the Constitution's one vote-one person principle. On the opposite end of the spectrum, more than 35% of the state's citizens reside in MDC's 8-county St. Louis Region, but these citizens would have an elected representative on the commission with only a 12% say in commission decisions and actions. No

matter where past conservation commissioners have called home, they have shown an admirable ability to work together and to serve all regions of the state. They actively seek out partnerships with city, county, state and federal agencies to make limited tax dollars and permit revenues go further in achieving mutual goals. Most importantly, MDC science-based management provides every individual in this state an abundance of quality opportunities to hunt, fish, hike, boat, bird watch, etc. Political Imbalance

By 1935, concerned citizens from across the state, said enough is enough; they were tired of seeing declines in our state's forest, fish, and wildlife resources due to gross mismanagement for personal benefit and political expediency. In 1936, citizens voted by an overwhelming majority to take the management of our state's forest, fish, and wildlife resources out of the hands of politicians and place it in the hands of a four-person, bi-partisan, commission. A commission committed to managing natural resources based on sound science, rather than politics. A commission framework that has, over and over again, demonstrated that a small but equal balance of Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, has fostered collaboration and cooperation that has achieved great things for the state's natural resources and its citizens. Later this year, Missourians will celebrate the 84th anniversary of the creation of the CC and MDC. Missourians can point with pride to all of MDC's achievements over the past eight-plus decades such as bringing back deer and turkey, revitalizing our timber industry, and providing some of the best fishing in the entire country. Many across the country look towards Missouri's conservation department with admiration and envy, often ranking it as the best in the United States. The Show-Me State has shown other states how conservation is done right. Many both in and outside of the state, believe that the success of MDC is due, in large part, to an apolitical commission protected from partisan politics by the state's Constitution. The current wording in Article IV, Section 40 (a) states "four members appointed by the governor, by and with the advice and consent of the senate, not more than two of whom shall be of the same political party." If HJR 55 is adopted, this vital equal party stipulation would become invalid, setting the oversight of MDC back to the early 1930's when partisan politics dominated and the cause of conservation struggled. Closing

In this challenging time of health pandemics and associated economic stress, citizens are looking to their elected officials to propose and implement legislation that will help improve people's lives. An old, yet wise, saying applies here. "If it aint broke, don't fix it". The Conservation Commission is not broke and it doesn't need fixing. Please join the millions of constituents who support conservation and desire our MDC to remain the best forest, fish, and wildlife agency in the country, by voting to reject House Joint Resolution 55. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Mark Zurbrick 20665 Trophy Lane Newburg, MO 65550 mzurbrick@gmail.com 573-647-0081



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHAEL BERG		PHONE NUMBER: 314-644-1011	
REPRESENTING: SIERRA CLUB MISSOURI CHAPTER		TITLE: SIERRA CLUB MISSOURI CHAPTER POLITICAL DIRECTOR	
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The Sierra Club Missouri Chapter opposes House Joint Resolution 55. The Missouri Department of Conservation has a nearly nine-decade track record of successfully balancing the needs of Missourians with scientifically sound protection of flora, fauna and wild lands. We do not need to inject further politics into a system that is presently serving Missouri well.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: MICHELE RISDAL-BARNES		PHONE NUMBER:	
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House Joint Resolution 55 is a solution in search of a problem. The original intent of the Conservation Commission was to allow for the management and protection of fish, forest, wildlife in a process SEPARATE from politics. Electing Commissioners is the exact OPPOSITE of what we the people intended for conservation in this state. The efforts of four Governor-appointed, and Senate-confirmed, volunteer Conservation Commissioners have provided Missouri with an 80-year proven track record for citizen-led conservation. Our state's nationally recognized system of conservation remains effective, in part, due to the efficiency of a small Commission, members having statewide responsibilities, that remains committed to balancing the needs of all Missouri citizens with science-based decision making for Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. I believe that politics should be left out of conservation in Missouri.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: NANCY YLVISAKER		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
CITY:		STATE:	ZIP:
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The original intent of the Conservation Commission was to allow for the management and protection of fish, forest, wildlife in a process that would eliminate politics by having a Governor-appointed and Senate confirmed process. Electing Commissioners is not what Missourians intended for conservation in this state. This current process - four Governor-appointed, and Senate-confirmed, volunteer Commissioners have provided Missouri has provided a successful 80-year track record for citizen-led conservation. It has led to Missouri being nationally recognized for its effective conservation. The small Commission, with members having statewide responsibilities, provides efficiency. The process provides for commitment to balancing the needs of all Missouri citizens, and protects science-based decision making for Missouri's fish, forests, and wildlife. I believe that politics should be left out of conservation in Missouri - and the current structure of the Conservation Commission should remain the same.



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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: RICHARD MENDENHALL		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
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I ask you to oppose HJR 55. HJR 55 would only make the Missouri Conservation Commission a political body. It would bring us back to the terrible decisions made by special interests in Missouri in the past. The decision to make the Commission non-partisan was exactly why voters in the middle of a crisis of Missouri natural resources approved the creation of the commission. The only compelling reasons for changing the size and composition of the Conservation Commission is make it political and that is simply not in the best interest of truly protecting this states natural resources for future generations. Our conservation commission should remain free to balance all Missourians' needs with science-based decision-making for our fish, forests, and wildlife. Politics need to continue to be left out of conservation in Missouri and in the hands of sound science-based decision makers.



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WITNESS NAME			
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:			
WITNESS NAME: SARA PARKER PAULEY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-522-4115	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: STEVE JONES		PHONE NUMBER:	
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:	
ADDRESS:			
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EMAIL: stevejonesmo@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 2:37 PM
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My name is Steve Jones. I oppose HJR 55. This testimony is solely on my own behalf. Though I'm retired, my profession was in data processing and analysis. Whoever is responsible for HJR 55 being heard today owes me a weekend — because I spent the last one poring over the data I am about to summarize for you. I've made my results available at: PDF: https://bit.ly/mdcregions_pdf Webpage: https://bit.ly/mdcregions_web All of the source data came from the web through publicly available official state and federal resources such as the US Census Bureau, the MO Dept. of Revenue and the MO Dept of Conservation. All data was the most recent available that preceded the impact of the Covid pandemic. In most cases that was 2019, in some 2018. As you know the Resolution seeks to politicize the Conservation Commission by increasing its size to 9, with 8 of those seats elected by the voters in each of the 8 MDC Regions. Thus five Commissioners would be a majority. So of the eight Conservation regions, the five most rural would be granted an enduring constitutionally guaranteed majority on the Conservation Commission. These 5 rural areas would thus dominate the statewide policy of the agency. This despite the fact that these same 5 regions account for less than a fourth of the Conservation sales tax that funds the MDC. The remaining three regions are paying the lion's share of the Conservation tab, yet HRJ 55 would dramatically reduce their influence. And the 5 regions contain barely over a quarter of the population of the state. So if HJR 55 passes, and the subsequent ballot is approved, the vast majority of Missouri voters, and citizens paying the bills for conservation would become little more than witnesses to the decision making process for the entire Conservation Department. And the five regions that would dominate the commission include less than 16% of Missouri's minority population. Thus HJR 55 would have the undeniable impact of nearly erasing any political impact of minority voices in this statewide agency. If you were to ask me why I believe the Conservation agenda of the 5 would be different from the 3, I'd tell you to go ask the Missouri Farm Bureau. While you're at it check their long-standing detailed wishlist regarding MDC policy. It starts on page 39 of their "Policy Book": (<https://mofb.org/MOFB/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20-21-MOFB-policy-book.pdf>) There is no chance that three quarters of Missouri voters would vote to surrender their voice in conservation matters. And as I'm sure you realize, the vast majority of sitting Representatives districts are within the 3 least rural MDC regions. Why would they support HJR 55, reducing their constituents' influence over conservation matters? So it would never. Ever. Pass. So the obvious question is, why are we here? What is really the goal of filing HJR 55? You folks may have a better idea of that than I do. I'm stumped. I am grateful for this opportunity to testify, and would be happy to respond to any followup questions.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: TYLER SCHWARTZE		PHONE NUMBER: 573-634-2322	
REPRESENTING: CONSERVATION FEDERATION OF MISSOURI		TITLE:	
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EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE:	SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 12:00 AM	
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WITNESS NAME			
INDIVIDUAL:			
WITNESS NAME: WILLIAM ZACHARY MORRIS		PHONE NUMBER:	
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EMAIL: zachmorris252@gmail.com	ATTENDANCE: Written		SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2021 1:38 PM
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My Name is Zach Morris and I am from Columbia. I am a biologist for an environmental services company and an avid hunter and angler. I would like to testify in opposition to this resolution. I don't see the need for such a major constitutional change when Missouri is already doing such a good job. We have always led the country in conservation, which makes Missouri a great place to hunt and fish and a place many people travel from far away to enjoy. This is no accident. We are one of very few states with an apolitical Conservation Commission, which is exactly why we have it so good. This resolution seems like a solution looking for a problem, and I fear it would have unintended negative consequences. By making the Commission regional, some parts of our state would have an outsized impact on the natural resources of other parts. Why should an elected official from the Ozark Hills decide deer hunting regulations for farmers in northwest Missouri? The Commission does an excellent job of managing fish and wildlife populations at a state level, which is good for all Missourians. As someone who hunts and fishes all over the state, I want it to stay this way. I fear that if the Commission was made regional, each commissioner would focus on the good of his or her region instead of the good of everyone in the state. This is how representation should work in the legislature, but not when it comes to hunting and fishing. Natural resources are not bound by jurisdictional boundaries, and managing them as if they were would be devastating to the fish and wildlife that are enjoyed by millions of Missourians. If this resolution was drafted out of concern for the Conservation Department's accountability to the people, I see no such concern. Currently, the Conservation Commission has an open and transparent rulemaking process with many opportunities for the public to engage. I fill out surveys frequently about season dates, limits, and other regulations. The commission is appointed by the Governor, a statewide elected official, and confirmed by the Senate, which represents every citizen of Missouri. Making the Commission regional would make the Conservation Department LESS accountable than they currently are. Public opinion, submitted through public comment or survey, might only matter to one commissioner and not to all of them. This would be a mistake. In my opinion, Missouri is the best hunting and fishing state in the country. I spend at least 40 to 50 days afield each year, pursuing doves, ducks, fish, and anything else I can. I strongly believe that the reason Missouri excels in this area is because of the apolitical makeup of the Conservation Commission. Please protect the great thing we have going and vote no on this resolution. If the committee has any additional questions, I can be reached at 417-213-1705 or zachmorris252@gmail.com Thank you.



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WITNESS NAME			
REGISTERED LOBBYIST:			
WITNESS NAME: BJ TANKSLEY		PHONE NUMBER: 573-893-1495	
REPRESENTING: MISSOURI FARM BUREAU		TITLE:	
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CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO	ZIP: 65102
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