



ASSOCIATION of
FISH & WILDLIFE
AGENCIES

The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

Hall of the States
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 725 • Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: 202-624-7890
Fax: 202-624-7891
E-mail: info@fishwildlife.org
www.fishwildlife.org

June 22, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies strongly opposes H.R. 2327, the so-called "Polar Bear Protection Act", both as a stand-alone bill and as an amendment to any other legislation. This bill, which would ban the importation of trophies of polar bears legally taken from polar bear populations in Canada, will further complicate polar bear management and not contribute to polar bear sustainability.

The Association was founded in 1902 as an inter-governmental organization of public agencies charged with the protection and management of North America's fish and wildlife resources. The Association's members include the fish and wildlife agencies of the states, provinces, as well as federal government agencies in the United States and Canada. The Association provides a forum for hundreds of senior level fish and wildlife public agency biologists across North America to develop positions on public policy issues involving wildlife conservation. The Association has been instrumental in promoting sound resource management and strengthening federal, state, and private cooperation in protecting and managing fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest.

This legislation would diminish the bear's value to the local communities which depend on hunts by United States hunters for income. We know from long experience that most successful wildlife conservation programs have, at their core, value to local people and communities. We are advised by our Canadian colleagues that many native communities earnestly engage Canada's polar bear management programs because these animals have value -- funding schools, community centers, etc. in those northern communities. This legislation, if passed and enacted, would just add to the list of other factors already complicating polar bear management -- melting ice pack, warming seas and loss of snow cover.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act prerequisite that imports come from certified stocks is an important tool for those biologists working with these local communities to regulate the harvest of the various polar bear populations. These carefully set and intensely monitored harvests are critical for the local community and are an important negotiating tool for the biologists. Science-informed regulated hunting ensures sustainability of polar bear populations.

Passage of this bill would not result in the taking of fewer polar bears; it will just complicate the work of those trying to conserve them. We urge that you not favorably consider HR 2327 either as a stand-alone bill or as an amendment to other legislation. Thank you for your sincere consideration of our perspectives.

Sincerely,

Matt Hogan
Executive Director

ASSOCIATION OF FISH & WILDLIFE AGENCIES

The voice of fish and wildlife agencies

Hall of the States
444 North Capitol Street, NW • Suite 725 • Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: 202-624-7890 • Fax: 202-624-7891 • E-mail: info@fishwildlife.org • www.fishwildlife.org