

Dear Rep. Stutes and committee members,

First, thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB33. I am strongly opposed to the passage of HB33, with the following justification.

As a retired wildlife biologist of over 28 years with the Department of Fish and Game plus six consecutive terms on the Board of Game, as chairman for most of those 18 years, I have had numerous opportunities to witness conflicts of interest and the public's concerns about conflicts. The Board of Game did not allow a board member to deliberate or participate at any level when addressing a proposal if they had a financial or personal interest in the proposal's outcome.

Prior to each meeting scheduled for Board action, members were required to provide a disclosure statement to identify any potential conflicts they may have during deliberations. Conflicts ranged from increasing the season length or bag limit in an area where a guide, on the Board, operated or planned to operate to changing a method and means regulation to allow use of certain equipment that a Board member sold in their store. During disclosure, Board members would identify which proposals they may be in conflict with and the chairman would request the person to step down, from the Board seat, during discussions on those proposals.

This open disclosure practice and temporarily stepping down by a Board member made the public aware that any conflict of interest would not be allowed, even if they were not allowed to vote. As we all have seen, as strong Board member can have a powerful influence on less experienced members, resulting in swayed votes.

I understand that these members do have experience and knowledge to share but that information can be obtained during public testimony. Members that have potential conflicts can ask questions to testifiers to cover the points they want other members to hear.

Ted Spraker

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