



LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

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STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED LICENSE AND FEE CHANGES BY THE LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

Louisiana Wildlife Federation supports the proposed restructuring of recreational and commercial licenses and fees put forward by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

The decline in mineral revenue combined with stagnant revenue from fees that have not been increased for more than 20 years leaves the Department in a projected deficit that needs to be addressed with more than a one-time injection of funds. Federation members depend on a Department able to manage and conserve our resources and are among those who purchase licenses for recreational or commercial use. Simply put, we need a securely funded agency able to manage what we value.

The Department is funded by user generated fees and has not requested revenue from the State's general funding in decades. Since 2009, more than \$65 million from statutory dedicated funds from the Department's funding have been used to balance the state's budget and that is not likely to be returned. Inflation also contributes to increased expenses and the Department is crucial to emergency response in natural disasters, enforcement of laws protecting our resources, collecting scientific data, and managing our natural resources and recreational areas.

Proposed adjustments to the hunting and fishing license structure and the commercial license structure puts Louisiana more in line with other states in the southeast. Simplifying the structure would help both management and users. Some of the modest license changes proposed help with identifying more hunters and anglers through purchase of licenses and this can secure federal matching funds that generate more money than the actual license fees being charged.

Looking at most of the proposed recreational licenses, the cost for a license for one year is likely less than the cost of gas for just one trip to a favorite hunting or fishing spot. Yet it is an important contribution each user makes to conserving our natural resources now and for the future.

Louisiana Wildlife Federation is a statewide conservation organization representing more than 8,000 members and 20 affiliate organizations supported by hunters, anglers, hikers, paddlers, birders, campers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

Rebecca Triche
Executive Director