

Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife, Inc.

Post Office Box 70143
Reno, Nevada 89570-0143

August 10, 2009

Re: Election of Officers at the August 2009 Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners Meeting
Wildlife Commissioners:

The Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife (Coalition) wishes to express our extreme disappointment with the lack of professionalism, ethics and misrepresentation of the will of the sportsmen and County Wildlife Advisory Boards by Chairman Gerald Lent. Over the course of the past year the Chairman has repeatedly pursued his own personal agenda, at times in direct opposition to the interests of the sportsmen of the State. Please see the attachment for a documentation of the Coalition's concerns.

As sportsmen and conservationists we all face serious challenges to the long-term sustainability of our hunting and fishing heritage as well as our wildlife resources. We cannot afford to bicker over differences in opinion any longer. Moving forward the Commission must hear all sides of an issue, make an honest assessment of the facts, and above all else make the decisions that are best for this State's sportsmen, conservation community and wildlife resources. To do so requires a chairman who is respectful to all of those who wish to take part in the Commission process and Department personnel. The Chairman must accurately represent the collective will of the County Advisory Boards and public even when they conflict with personal views, particularly when representing such views in the State Legislature.

The Coalition strongly urges the Wildlife Commission to change leadership for the upcoming year. The position of Chairman is vital since it is the chairman that is recognized as the official representative of the Commission, sets Commission agendas, sets the tone for public involvement and appoints membership to Committees of the Commission. We urge you to restore cohesive leadership that will work with, not against, the Department of Wildlife, County Advisory Boards, sportsmen, and the public.

Thank you,

Larry Johnson, President
Tom Smith, Vice President
Jim Jackson, Treasurer

Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife Directors:

Joel Blakeslee
Judi Caron
Billie Gregory

Mel Belding
Fred Church
Hugh Judd

Bob Brunner
Jeremy Drew

**NEVADA SPORTSMEN AND CONSERVATIONISTS WORKING FOR THE
ENHANCEMENT OF WILDLIFE AND HABITAT.**

Attachment 1
**Documentation of Agenda Manipulations
and Inconsistencies During the 2009 Legislative Session**

Re: Election of Officers: August 14, 2009 Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners Meeting

August 2009 Commission Meeting:

The agenda has been amended to place Election of Officers as the #1 item. Placing this item ahead of public comment and approval of the agenda minimizes input from the public and County Wildlife Advisory Boards. Not allowing public or Advisory Board Comment is in stark contrast to the intent of the process and open meeting forum.

June 2009 Commission Meeting:

Coalition members in attendance at the meeting took exception to two particular actions taken by the Chairman. For a chairman to chastise the Director of the Department of Wildlife in a public forum is unprofessional and detrimental to the moral of the Department. The Director is appointed by the Governor, and any review or questions of his performance should be directed to the Governor. The Commission, by statute (NRS501-181), has the authority to set policy and regulations, not dictate the daily operations or conduct personnel evaluations.

The chairman also called into question the integrity of two prominent sportsmen's organizations that had requested to be vendors of 2010 Heritage Tags. The information provided was based on rumor and factually inaccurate. The Chair implied that the Heritage Tag Committee's recommendations were made without the necessary background knowledge of these organizations "track records". The Chairman of the Commission must be able to present accurate and unbiased information while facilitating such decisions. To provide false information in a public forum in order to sway a vote and belittle a Commission Subcommittees' decision is bias and unprofessional.

These actions are concerning in that the Commission, Department and sportsmen must work together to achieve common goals. These types of actions create animosity among the Commission and between the Commission and those who inform and are involved with the process. Differences of opinion must be handled in an unbiased, respectful and professional manner.

April 2009 Special Legislative Meeting:

After receiving a great deal of protest for not listing legislative items for action during the March 2009 regularly scheduled Commission Meeting, and upon recommendation of several Commissioners, Chairman Lent scheduled a special legislative meeting on April 6th. The schedule conflicted with an Assembly hearing schedule for that afternoon.

County Advisory Boards forwarded unanimous opposition to Assembly Bills 362 and 516, and unanimous support for Assembly Bill 183. The Commission followed the recommendations of

the County Advisory Boards, while Chairman Lent voted against the motion to oppose AB 362, abstained on the motion to oppose AB 516 and voted against a motion to support AB 183.

In the April 8 Assembly Natural Resource Hearing, Chairman Lent reported the Commission's support for AB-183, but was not clear if the Commission supported the proposed amendments. Assemblyman Goicoechea, the Bill's primary sponsor, had to point out that it was actually the Wildlife Commission's recommended amendments that had been included.

March 2009 Commission Meeting:

At the February Wildlife Commission Meeting, Assembly Bills 241 and 362 were discussed. Both Bills received universal opposition from County Advisory Boards and sportsmen in attendance. Chairman Lent, on behalf of himself, subsequently testified in an Assembly Hearing in favor of AB 362 with full knowledge of statewide opposition. During a subsequent Commission Legislative Subcommittee meeting, Chairman Lent omitted these Bills from the agenda. This prevented sportsmen's input, and did not allow the Subcommittee recommendations be advanced to the full Wildlife Commission. At the March Wildlife Commission Meeting, Chairman Lent modified the agenda so that legislative issues were "information only", preventing the full Commission from taking any action to support or oppose any particular Bill during a critical juncture in the Legislative Session.

February 2009 Commission Meeting:

During the February 2009 Wildlife Commission Meeting changes in Commission Policy 1 were opposed by every County Advisory Board and sportsman in attendance. The proposed policy changes were:

1. Commission conducting personnel reviews of the NDOW Director.
 - a) **Review of Director:** *Annually, or as needed, the Commission will review the performance of the Director of NDOW. The Commission may elect to forward this review to the Governor of Nevada in accordance with the duties as prescribed in Nevada Revised Statutes.*

2. Commission acceptance (or rejection) of all grants and matching funds, along with control of how these funds are spent.
 - b) **Acceptance of gifts, grants, donations, and bequests:** *All gifts, grants, donations, and bequests made to the Nevada Department of Wildlife, or any sub-agency thereof, will be presented to the Commission for acceptance and recognition. The Commission shall be allowed to offer input on which programs monetary gifts should be allocated. State grants, federal grants, PIW donations, and Operation Game Thief donations are specifically excluded from the requirements of this policy.*

In spite of overwhelming opposition to these concepts, Chairman Lent referred the matters back to a subcommittee for "rewording". However, the same wording was inserted into Assembly Bill 516 within 30 days.

The Commission also considered a petition from Mr. Ira Hansen requesting to clarify and define what “disturb” is in NRS 503.454.2 regarding trapping. The petition was denied by the commission on a 7-2 vote, with no further clarifications requested. However, Mr. Hansen presented an amendment to Senate Bill 411 during the legislative session based on a letter of request from Chairman Lent on Commission letterhead (see attachment 2). There is no record showing the Commission’s desire for legislative clarification on the matter.

COMMISSIONERS:

DR. GERALD A. LENT
Chairman

HON LUNE
Vice Chairman

THOMAS CAVIN
MICHAEL McBEATH
DAVID McFARLANE
PETER MURPHY
SCOTT PARRIS
DANIEL SWANSON
GRANT WALLACE

ROBERT E. MAYHEW
Secretary

STATE OF NEVADA
BOARD OF WILDLIFE COMMISSIONERS

1100 Valley Road, Reno, Nevada 89512
Telephone (775) 688-1500 • Fax (775) 688-1207



JIM GIBBONS
Governor

May 12, 2009

Ira Hansen
58 Hardy Drive
Sparks, NV 89431
(775) 626-7777
(775) 322-8889 Fax

Dear Mr. Hansen:

As you know, the Attorney General's opinion expressed during your petition hearing at the Wildlife Commission about "disturb" as currently interpreted creates a difficulty in being flexible with policy. Further clarification by the legislature will give the Wildlife Commission an opportunity to address this gray area in the law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gerald A. Lent".

Gerald A. Lent, O.D.
Chairman