ENROLLED HOUSE
CONCURRENT
RESOLUTION NO. 1020

By: Mass, Dunegan, Erwin, Fields, Hutchison, Matlock, Rhodes (Dusty) and Thomas of the House

and

Shurden, Bell and Long (Lewis) of the Senate

A Concurrent Resolution relating to wildlife management and regulation; creating the Southeast Oklahoma Wildlife Study Committee; and providing for membership, officers, meetings, quorums, reimbursement, staffing and duties and responsibilities of such Committee.

WHEREAS, the rules promulgated and adopted by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission are contrary to the views of the average sportsman participating in wildlife activities in southeast Oklahoma; and

WHEREAS, the perception of such sportsmen in southeast Oklahoma is that there has been a significant decline in the overall number of whitetail deer, due primarily to a disease commonly referred to as "blue tongue" and to extreme hunting pressure; and

WHEREAS, both the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and sportsmen in southeast Oklahoma agree that there has been a significant decline in the population of the eastern turkeys and the bobwhite quail; and

WHEREAS, solutions to the decline in the population of the whitetail deer, eastern turkeys and bobwhite quail have not been adequately addressed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; and

WHEREAS, the geography of the wildlife habitat has been altered dramatically by oil, gas and timber industries and such change has not been properly addressed by the rules of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the future of all wildlife in this state that a study be made of such declining populations, that the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation review the rules concerning such wildlife, and that recommendations be made to attempt to prevent the further decline of such wildlife populations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 44TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE, THE SENATE CONCURRING THEREIN:

A. THAT there is hereby created until July 1, 1994, the "Southeast Oklahoma Wildlife Study Committee". The Committee shall be composed of eighteen (18) members as follows:

1. Four sportsmen holding current hunting licenses who are residents of southeast Oklahoma and who have been residents of Oklahoma for not less than ten (10) years. Two such sportsmen shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two such sportsmen shall be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

2. Four landowners who are Oklahoma taxpayers, have authorized hunting on their private property, are residents of southeast Oklahoma and have been residents of Oklahoma for not less than ten (10) years. Two such landowners shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two such landowners shall be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

3. Four persons appointed by the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Director who are employees of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation;

4. Three members of the Oklahoma State Senate appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one of which shall be the chairman of the Senate Wildlife Committee; and

5. Three members of the Oklahoma House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of which shall be the chairman of the House Wildlife Committee.

The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of the Committee shall be elected from the other members of the Committee.

Meetings shall be held at the call of the Chairperson and a quorum of members appointed shall be necessary to conduct all business. Nonlegislative members of the Committee shall receive no compensation for work on the Committee but shall receive mileage reimbursement in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act to and from the designated meetings from funds of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Legislative members shall receive reimbursement from the house in which they serve pursuant to the State Travel Reimbursement Act. It is the intent of the Legislature that staff be provided as needed by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

B. The duties and responsibilities of the Committee shall include but not be limited to:

1. Conducting an interim wildlife population review based on information presently available for the geographic area consisting of all counties south of I-40. The western boundary of such area shall include a portion of Okfuskee, Hughes, Coal, Atoka and Choctaw Counties;

2. Communicating with wildlife specialists and consultants in the area of wildlife populations and diseases in order to become better informed on the issues of wildlife depopulation;

3. Recommending policies and programs designed to stop the decline of the targeted wildlife populations in southeastern Oklahoma, while still accommodating the diversity of wildlife populations and needs of other regions of the state;

4. Holding at least six public hearings in the specified southeast Oklahoma area, such hearings to be held in locations most accessible to persons affected by the study. Adequate notice for such hearings shall be by publication in all local newspapers in the affected areas and the publication shall be an expense of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation;

5. Making findings and recommendations for any necessary legislation or for any modifications of the rules of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Commission to aid in stopping the decline of the targeted wildlife populations in southeastern Oklahoma, while still accommodating the diversity of wildlife populations and needs of other regions of the state; and

6. Filing a report on its findings and recommendations prior to July 1, 1994, with the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Chairpersons of the Wildlife Committees of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Copies of such report shall be made available on request from the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation and copies shall be made accessible in each county courthouse within the study area.

C. The Legislature recommends the new director of the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation should be a citizen of the State of Oklahoma for at least five (5) years prior to appointment.

Adopted by the House of Representatives the 13th day of May, 1993.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

Adopted by the Senate the 5th day of May, 1993.

President of the Senate