

1 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3 1st Session of the 53rd Legislature (2011)

4 HOUSE
5 RESOLUTION 1020

By: Blackwell

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7 AS INTRODUCED

8 A Resolution supporting Lesser Prairie Chicken
9 conservation.

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12 WHEREAS, the Lesser Prairie Chicken is a grassland obligate game
13 bird that occurs in the mixed grass and short-grass native
14 rangelands of Northwest Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Panhandle; and

15 WHEREAS, populations of the Lesser Prairie Chicken, an iconic
16 symbol of the mixed-grass prairie and an indicator species whose
17 presence attests to the overall health of the grassland community in
18 which it occurs, have been declining, rangewide, for many years; and

19 WHEREAS, the Lesser Prairie Chicken, a candidate for listing by
20 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as threatened or endangered under
21 the authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1976, due to its
22 recently elevated listing priority status, is likely to be listed as
23 threatened in the near future; and

1 WHEREAS, the impact of listing the Lesser Prairie Chicken is
2 largely unknown, but has potential to negatively impact the economy
3 of the area in which it occurs by imposing additional regulations or
4 restrictions on activities occurring within the range of the Lesser
5 Prairie Chicken, which may hinder or curtail activities with
6 potential to boost local economies; and

7 WHEREAS, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, the
8 agency with management authority over the Lesser Prairie Chicken,
9 has the ability to work cooperatively with Oklahoma State
10 University, Panhandle State University, the University of Oklahoma
11 including the Sutton Avian Research Center, nongovernmental
12 organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, landowners, and other
13 state and federal agencies to address additional research needs to
14 identify factors contributing to the decline of the Lesser Prairie
15 Chicken; and

16 WHEREAS, the Office of the Secretary of the Environment has the
17 ability to coordinate the activities of the agencies within this
18 state, and to bring together agencies, researchers, landowners and
19 industry leaders to cooperatively guide the efforts to restore
20 Lesser Prairie Chicken populations while encouraging responsible
21 development; and

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1 WHEREAS, cooperative conservation of the Lesser Prairie Chicken
2 is desirable in order to help restore healthy populations of the
3 Lesser Prairie Chicken; and

4 WHEREAS, through a cooperative management effort including all
5 stakeholders, which addresses the needs and concerns of each while
6 fostering communication, cooperation and participation by the broad
7 community with an interest in Lesser Prairie Chicken research,
8 management, and conservation, the decline in Lesser Prairie Chicken
9 populations can be minimized or curtailed in areas throughout their
10 five-state range in a manner that is compatible with economic
11 development.

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
13 OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 53RD OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

14 THAT the House of Representatives of the State of Oklahoma
15 directs the Secretary of the Environment and Oklahoma Department of
16 Wildlife Conservation, working with Oklahoma State University,
17 Panhandle State University, Sutton Avian Research Center, U.S. Fish
18 and Wildlife Service, landowners, and other stakeholders to identify
19 research needs and develop a conservation plan for Lesser Prairie
20 Chickens in Oklahoma to protect, enhance, and restore their habitat
21 while also addressing other factors leading to their decline.

22 THAT the Office of the Secretary of the Environment and the
23 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation continue to participate

1 in the ongoing five-state effort to inform management and
2 development decisions which have the potential to impact Lesser
3 Prairie Chickens and their habitats.

4 THAT the Office of the Secretary of the Environment and the
5 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation continue to diligently
6 seek to identify ways to incentivize Lesser Prairie Chicken and
7 habitat conservation, and encourage responsible development.

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9 DIRECT TO CALENDAR.

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