

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 53rd Legislature (2011)

3 HOUSE

4 RESOLUTION 1020

By: Blackwell

5
6 AS INTRODUCED

7 A Resolution supporting Lesser Prairie Chicken
8 conservation.

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, the impact of listing the Lesser Prairie Chicken is
24 largely unknown, but has potential to negatively impact the economy

1 of the area in which it occurs by imposing additional regulations or
2 restrictions on activities occurring within the range of the Lesser
3 Prairie Chicken, which may hinder or curtail activities with
4 potential to boost local economies; and

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

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

20 WHEREAS, cooperative conservation of the Lesser Prairie Chicken
21 is desirable in order to help restore healthy populations of the
22 Lesser Prairie Chicken; and

23 WHEREAS, through a cooperative management effort including all
24 stakeholders, which addresses the needs and concerns of each while

1 fostering communication, cooperation and participation by the broad
2 community with an interest in Lesser Prairie Chicken research,
3 management, and conservation, the decline in Lesser Prairie Chicken
4 populations can be minimized or curtailed in areas throughout their
5 five-state range in a manner that is compatible with economic
6 development.

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

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

17 THAT the Office of the Secretary of the Environment and the
18 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation continue to participate
19 in the ongoing five-state effort to inform management and
20 development decisions which have the potential to impact Lesser
21 Prairie Chickens and their habitats.

22 THAT the Office of the Secretary of the Environment and the
23 Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation continue to diligently
24

1 seek to identify ways to incentivize Lesser Prairie Chicken and
2 habitat conservation, and encourage responsible development.

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