

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1012

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Setting forth certain legislative policy recommendations to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

WHEREAS, in recent years, irresistible demographic and economic forces have exerted powerful and pervasive changes on the American hunting tradition; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota has not proven immune from these national trends but finds herself struggling to adapt and adjust to pressures which threaten many longstanding social relationships; and

WHEREAS, South Dakotans, as residents of one of the last few truly rural states in this rapidly urbanizing country, cherish our heritage of hunting, fishing, and outdoor activities and wish to preserve that experience for our posterity; and

WHEREAS, we recognize that the foundation of this rural tradition has always been the stewardship of the land and preservation of wildlife resources exercised by the American family farmer and rancher; and

WHEREAS, the sacrifice and diligence that South Dakota landowners have freely offered in support of our wildlife and game resources constitute a debt of gratitude which can never be adequately repaid from the public treasury; and

WHEREAS, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission has attempted to seek out and implement new policies in response to changing conditions which have been met with frequent and, sometimes unfair, criticism from all sides; and

WHEREAS, the Legislative Research Council conducted a comprehensive study of hunting issues during the 1997 interim in the hope of providing an open forum for the expression of contrasting viewpoints and the mediation of honest differences; and

WHEREAS, it is now incumbent upon this legislative body to deliberate over these issues and to support the efforts of the commission by offering a number of policy recommendations that we may deem appropriate and beneficial to the resolution of these problems:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-third Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that the Legislature urges the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to consider each of the following proposed policy changes and, after due deliberation and evaluation, to implement these policies, with such alterations as the

commission may deem necessary and appropriate, and, to the extent possible, to do so in time for the 1998 hunting season:

- (1) Increase the number of big game licenses and allow nonresident and resident big game licenses to be nonunit specific or multiunit specific to facilitate continuing relationships between landowners and nonresidents with whom they may have formed a special friendship. Revenues received by the department shall be used by the department to attempt to acquire free public hunting access through lease agreements and to support expanded wildlife damage management programs;
- (2) Move up drawing dates on various license classes to allow hunters more and earlier opportunity to contact landowners and structure their hunting experience;
- (3) Provide that if an applicant obtains the signature of an area landowner on any valid application for any big game license attesting to the landowner's willingness to permit the applicant to hunt on the landowner's land, the applicant shall receive a preference in the license drawing;
- (4) Aggressively solicit landowner input in formulating wildlife management policies and determining season design;
- (5) Remove the one-thousand dollar cap on walk-in area lease payments to encourage landowners to offer larger tracts of land for inclusion in the program;
- (6) Evaluate whether the department is employing a sufficient number of conservation officers and whether these conservation officers are sufficiently trained and supported to adequately perform their crucial role of interacting with both landowners and sportsmen, to provide prompt and effective depredation mitigation, and to enforce trespass and game law violations;
- (7) Endeavor to identify locations as early in the year as possible where depredation is likely to constitute a problem and to initiate contacts with area landowners in an attempt to prevent depredation before complaints come in to the department;
- (8) Consider a moratorium on large-scale land acquisitions while placing greater emphasis on the use of leases in order to facilitate public access;
- (9) Extend the special west river trophy buck program to include the east river resident;
- (10) Consider preferences, special license classifications, or other means of encouraging the

harvest of antlerless deer;

- (11) Establish a service within the department whereby interested landowners may, free of charge, make available to hunters a listing of properties on which they are willing to provide general hunting access and any terms or conditions that may apply. It should be clear that listing property in this manner does not limit the landowner's right to refuse access to any objectionable individual;
- (12) Reevaluate whether populations of feral game species cannot be identified and treated differently than populations of the same species of wild game;
- (13) Study the feasibility of implementing a pilot program to address the present dissatisfactions with west river deer licensing as well as the feasibility of coupon systems and report findings and recommendations to the next legislative assembly; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we commend the efforts of all men and women of good faith who are working constructively to preserve our American heritage of free and responsible public hunting and private agricultural landownership and pledge ourselves to be open and receptive to all ideas and opinions that are intended to foster those ends.

Adopted by the House of Representatives,
Concurred in by the Senate,

February 11, 1998
February 19, 1998

Rex Hagg
Speaker of the House

Karen Gerdes
Chief Clerk of the House

Carole Hillard
President of the Senate

Patricia Adam
Secretary of the Senate