



PUBLIC INPUT COORDINATOR
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry
Policy Division
Species Conservation Policy Branch
Wildlife Section
300 Water Street
Peterborough Ontario
K9J 8M5

RE: EBR Registry No. 012-5485, Black Bear Pilot Project

This submission is in response to the above noted Environmental Bill of Rights Registry Number 012-5485 which includes an amendment to two regulations under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 to extend and expand the Black Bear Pilot Project in northern and central Ontario for an additional five years and to regulate the baiting of black bears.

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) provides its full support for the proposed extension and expansion of the black bear pilot project to address safety concerns in Northern Ontario and bring much needed economic and tourism activity to the region.

As you are aware, municipalities in Northern Ontario, have been calling for the reinstatement of the spring hunt for several years to address the escalating issue of nuisance bears. FONOM welcomed the announcement in 2014 that permitted eight Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) to enter into a two year pilot spring bear hunt. However, with a limited hunt, it arguably did not allow for sufficient data collection to assess the pilot effectively. Lengthening the pilot by five years and to include all WMUs that currently have a fall bear hunt as well as allowing non-resident hunters to participate, we believe that the Ministry will be able to collect the much needed data to assess and justify the need for a permanent reinstatement. It will also ensure that all Northerners are offered the same opportunity to address safety concerns associated with human-bear interactions.

While ensuring public safety in Northern communities remains our top priority, we also recognize that the pilot expansion to additional WMUs and non-resident hunters will provide economic and tourism benefits. By allowing non-resident hunters to participate in the pilot spring bear hunt, tourist outfitters and surrounding businesses will financially benefit as non-resident hunters are required to utilize the services of an outfitter. Additionally, having non-resident hunters participate in the pilot will also enhance data collection as they report on their participation at a higher rate than resident hunters.

FONOM

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

Furthermore, FONOM supports proposals to regulate the practice of black bear baiting for both spring and fall hunting seasons. Specifically, we support regulating the practice of black bear baiting for the purpose of ensuring public safety by permitting placement of bait a specified distance from locations where people could be engaged in other activities. As well, regulations that allow for easier identification and protection of females with cubs in the spring is also supported.

We look forward to further communications on the pilot spring bear hunt and once again, we thank you for listening to the concerns of Northerners.