

FONOM

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities

April 17, 2014

Honourable David Oraziotti
Ministry of Natural Resources
Whitney Block, 6th Floor, Room 6630
99 Wellesley Street West
Toronto, ON
M7A 1W3

Dear Minister Oraziotti,

The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) expresses their appreciation of the Provincial government for taking the first step and implementing the Spring Bear Hunt program.

The limited selection of Wildlife Management Units that have been chosen for the pilot project is of concern to FONOM as the majority of our members are not eligible to opt into this program. The exclusion of rural communities is potentially damaging as these are often the municipalities that are affected the greatest with the lowest ability to manage or address nuisance bears. The government had made the announcement of the pilot project on grounds of public safety, yet it only addresses particular regions. This demonstrates that one region's safety is more valuable than another region.

Also, there are other important reasons to address the issue of nuisance bears such as the damage to agricultural lands that bears are causing. Crop damage is a major concern to farmers in northern Ontario. Once grain begins to grow, should it become damaged, packed down or bent in any way, it does not revive and thus that area is lost to the farmer for the season. There is also threats and evidence of losses to livestock from bear predation.

The sustainability of farm businesses is integral to the Ontario food system and rural communities and also provides an opportunity to drive the Ontario economy forward. It is important to note that while Ontario farmers are eligible for compensation for losses to livestock from bear predation, provided that there remains physical evidence of the loss, there is no similar program to provide compensation for crop damages by bears.

Furthermore, there is an opportunity to bring economic benefit to the north through the expansion of the spring bear hunt pilot project. Beyond safety and the agricultural impacts, the spring bear hunt brings a great deal of economic benefit to the north through outfitters as well as surrounding businesses such as gas stations and grocery stores. Also, the spring bear hunt generates revenues for the province in the form of land

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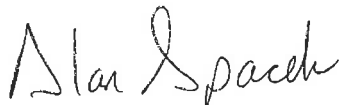
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use permits and licensing. Since the cancellation of the spring bear in 1999, nothing has replaced the loss of income of outfitters and guides from non-resident hunters. Therefore, not only expanding the spring bear hunt to include all Wildlife Management Units, but also to include non-resident hunters would be valuable to the northern economy.

FONOM believes that it would be beneficial for the Ministry to look at other jurisdictions that currently allow a spring bear hunt. Most provinces in Canada allow for a spring bear hunt. Many American states also allow for a spring bear hunt and still maintain a stable black bear population.

It is imperative that policies taken by the Ministry of Natural Resources take into account the realities that northerners face. A holistic approach to addressing nuisance bears would include efforts to address a number of concerns and residents across the north equally.

Sincerely,



Alan Spacek
President