



MEDIA RELEASE

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BC WILDLIFE WILL SUFFER UNDER PROVINCE'S NEW DIRECTION

Wildlife Act Review lacks vision, has gaping holes

VANCOUVER, BC – Leading environmental groups, with the support of one of BC's largest labour unions, are criticizing the province's proposed changes to wildlife and hunting laws.

In a submission prepared by Sierra Legal and the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre, the coalition's criticisms of the proposed changes to the 25-year-old *Wildlife Act* point to:

- failing to protect endangered species habitat,
- ignoring the effects of global warming;
- turning a blind eye to the unsustainable and unpopular grizzly bear hunt;
- failing to address outdated and contradictory wildlife laws;
- a so-called "public consultation" process relying solely on the internet;
- doubling the number of hunters to 20,000 including untrained 10-year-old children;
- an ineffective and contradictory legal regime that puts wildlife protection in last place.

"Our research shows that BC is home to 1,300 species at risk – more than any place in Canada with no region of the province spared from the risk of extinction," said Lindsay Coulter of the David Suzuki Foundation. "We need conservation-first leadership from the Ministry of Environment."

"They call this a proposal for the 21st century but in many ways it looks like it was written for the 18th," added Chris Genovali of Raincoast Conservation Society. "One need look no further than the failure to announce an end to the internationally condemned, unsustainable grizzly hunt."

"In the face of rapidly increasing species extinction and the looming effects of climate change, strong laws are needed to protect our wildlife," said Devon Page, staff lawyer for Sierra Legal. "We need meaningful consultation via public hearings on this issue to give us those strong laws."

"BC's wildlife is suffering because of massive staffing cuts and the contracting out of wildlife management," said George Heyman, President, BC Government and Service Employees' Union.

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