

February 13, 2020

Jamie Stewart, Manager
Species Conservation Policy Branch - Wildlife Section
300 Water Street
5th Floor, North tower
Peterborough, ON K9J 3C7

Subject: ERO# 019-1112 Proposed changes to black bear hunting regulations

Dear Mr. Stewart,

On behalf of our Board of Directors and members, Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario (NOTO) is writing today to support the proposal listed above.

We have advocated and will continue to advocate that a properly regulated spring bear hunt will support sustainable management of our black bear populations and provide benefits to the Ontario economy through taxes and jobs.

A report that was circulated by your Ministry in 2018, titled; *Black bear hunters in Ontario in 2017: Expenditures, characteristics, and hunting experiences*, showed that the pilot spring bear hunt season in 2017 hunters spent \$13.8 million and the fall hunt contributed \$36.8 million. Together the spring and fall bear hunt season contributions are \$50.6 million. This report confirms that the return of the spring bear hunt to Ontario is supported by resident and non-resident hunters and will have a positive impact to the Province.

For the tourism industry, returning a spring bear hunt to Ontario will provide bear outfitters the opportunity to be more flexible with their bear hunting offerings to non-resident and resident hunters.

We are encouraged that MNRF has presented changes that will reduce conflicts on the ground in Bear Management Areas. Conflicts involving non-resident property owners as well as resident hunters who hire the services of non-licensed bear outfitters has been a growing concern.

We are also encouraged that the bear hunting opportunities that were given to non-resident property owners and non-resident immediate relatives will be redistributed to tourism businesses. This shows our bear outfitting industry that our Ontario Government sees the value in tourism as an economic driver and that it supports businesses in the Province. It also acknowledges the experience and knowledge that our industry has to provide professional hunting services.

Requiring those that offer bear guiding services to residents to have a Licence to Provide Black Bear Hunting Services, will not only help to reduce conflicts on the ground in our BMAs but will ensure that economic contributions are made for these services. It will certainly help to address the issues of fairness as it relates to business in our industry.

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These changes are a step in the right direction to supporting a sustainable black bear hunt as well as the many bear outfitting businesses that have and will continue to contribute to significantly to the economy of Ontario.

We are pleased to support the components of this proposal and look forward to continuing our work with your ministry to develop enhanced harvest management approaches/systems that will further support the sustainability of our black bear populations as well as our bear outfitting industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. Marcil". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Laurie Marcil
Executive Director
Nature and Outdoor Tourism Ontario