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**PRESENTATION TO THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LEGISLATIVE  
SELECT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Good Day, I am Chuck Zuckerman, Vice-President of the BC Wildlife Federation, the leading conservation organization in B.C. promoting the wise use of our fish, wildlife, and habitat.

On behalf of my 43,000 members, we welcome this opportunity to address your Select Standing Committee regarding the **vital issues that relate to natural resource management and wildlife sustainability.**

BC's fish and wildlife management agencies have historically been understaffed and underfunded. They have not lived up to our provinces' motto of "Splendour Without Diminishment."

While B.C. is the most bio diverse jurisdiction in North America, when it comes to funding, **we spent \$34 million** on fish and wildlife management in 2017, while Idaho State, one fifth the size of BC, with one-third the population, spent three times more. **\$34 million compared with \$106 million**

**The Results of Our Inadequate Funding are:**

1. Mountain caribou are endangered and caribou herds decline across the province.
2. Chilcotin and Thompson River steelhead face imminent extinction. Annual returns of 5,000 fish are estimated to be fewer than 50 fish in the Chilcotin system.
3. Moose populations have experienced 70% declines in the last decade and
4. Mule deer and elk populations are also experiencing severe decline throughout the province.

The mountain pine beetle epidemic, inadequate fire suppression methods and climate change, have all had deleterious effects on our forest ecosystems.

At the same time more British Columbians experience our province through various recreational and sustenance activities. Hunting participation for sustenance food has increased from 86,000 in 2005 to 112,000 in 2015 – more than a 30% increase.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people exercise their constitutionally protected right to a sustainable harvest. Hunting and angling continue to be cultural family activities through which natural organic food is harvested and community traditions and ethics are passed on to future generations.

Chronic under-funding and resulting harvest declines have unfortunately divided these communities.

**What Needs to Be Done?**

**Our 1<sup>st</sup> Recommendation is to – Establish Wildlife Governance and Funding Models following the Premier's mandate to: "Improve wildlife management and habitat conservation and collaborate with stakeholders" by:**



1. Dedicating all hunting license fees to wildlife management,
2. Dedicating a portion of all revenue from those who profit from our natural resources to fish and wildlife management,
3. Ensuring that all funding is leveraged and result in on-the-ground management activities;
4. Set objectives for habitat, fish and wildlife in legislation,
5. Ensure that those who purchase licences have a say in how their fees are allocated via an inclusive governance model, and
6. Ensure that First Nations are included.

**Our 2<sup>nd</sup> RECOMMENDATION is to Establish a \$200 Million Permanent Water Security Fund**

That would:

1. Develop collaborative partnerships at the appropriate watershed scale,
2. Modernize watershed-based land-use plans,
3. Develop community-driven restoration initiatives, and,
4. Develop innovations supporting province-wide advancements in watershed protection

Your children and their children are depending on you to make the right decision.  
They are depending on your Party's to be their voice to restore their mountains, waters, and forests.

It was only a very short time ago when a person could easily see mountain caribou, or catch a world-renowned Thompson steelhead. Sadly, tomorrow they will have to visit a museum.

We can change the future today. We can fix these problems today by providing adequate, stable and continuous appropriate funding.

Success or failure is in your hands.

Thank you

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