

Petition

Government must fix bear mismanagement crisis:

Ontario's Black bear overpopulation problem desperately needs effective government action

"Whereas indicative of serious overpopulation; growing numbers of black bears in Northern Ontario are invading cottage areas, backyards, school yards, city/town streets, landfill sites are now also full of overcrowded hungry bears. Northern Ontario news media endlessly report stories of problem bears destroying public property, attacking, mauling, injuring and tragically killing humans; and "Whereas harvest levels are extremely low; other than regulated hunting harvest (recorded estimate 5000 annually), road kills, rail kills, and those killed to protect livestock and humans (unknown number), bears in Ontario have virtually no other natural mortality. Bears sleep (hibernate) throughout the barren winter months and seem immune to the many diseases that control excess numbers of most other wildlife populations; and "Whereas annual birthrate is extremely high and out-of-control; approx 30,000 sows of cub bearing age with an average birthrate of 2.4 cubs annually with a 50% survival rate, suggests increased population amounts to 36,000 cubs; and "Whereas MNR bear population data is uncertain, unrecorded mortality unknown; regulated hunting annual recorded mortality is 5000 bears, less the unrecorded mortality (unknown number) and the regulated harvest (5000) Ontario's bear population arguably grows more or less than 25,000 cubs each year; and "Whereas too many bears are killed/wasted and orphaned cub numbers rise; the 2 year old "Bear Wise program" is ineffective, unscientific wildlife management, addresses the symptoms rather than the problem, costs taxpayers millions, promotes the indiscriminate killing/wasting of nuisance males, females and the subsequent increased numbers of orphaned cubs; and "Whereas there are too many bears and not enough food; MNR consistently states, " The problems are related to food and that sort of thing," MNR must then recognize that the carrying capacity (food supply) of the northern Ontario bear habitat is grossly exceeded. Bears simply cannot be endlessly stockpiled in Northern Ontario; and Whereas tons of food supplied by Outfitters in spring helps keep bears in the bush; prior to 1999 licensed bear outfitters with BMAs (Bear Management Areas) provided an important food supply (baiting stations) to thousands of excess bears each spring, when other natural food sources are scarce, reducing the number of bears forced to search urban areas for their food.

Also gunshots associated with spring bear harvest reinforced the fear of man in bears, thus reducing incidents of human/bear conflict; and "Whereas increased hunting harvest provides cost effective population control; Supportive scientific evidence, suggests the government must consider the cost effective option and utilize the valuable economic incentive provided by increased hunting opportunities (spring hunt) to help fund and control bear overpopulation. Government must assume responsibility and take appropriate action to fix its bear mismanagement crisis in northern Ontario; and "Whereas protecting bears to be ultimately shot and wasted serves no meaningful purpose; many more bears are killed/wasted as "problem bears" than the regulated harvest. Black bears once a valuable big game resource generating social, wildlife management and economic tourist benefits worth millions bears are now shamefully considered 'nuisance value' and an expensive taxpayer liability. Laws geared to prevent over-harvest are therefore redundant, difficult to enforce, open to abuse and lead to vigil-anti management solutions to bear problems (shoot-shovel-shut-up); and "Whereas culls will add to current economic waste of once valuable resource; the return of the spring bear hunt alone will not fix this seriously out of- control problem and the option of organized culls means more indiscriminate killing and wasted bears; and "Whereas infamous Government bounty eliminated southern Ontario bears; once a common denizen of Southern Ontario the Government of Upper Canada instituted a ten-dollar bounty on black bear in 1793 to 1796. In many areas bears were relentlessly killed (hunted, trapped and poisoned) until none were to be found in the major agricultural settlements of Ontario; and "Whereas excess bears trying to naturally migrate south are currently killed and wasted; bears trying to return to their former range are either indiscriminately shot by police or MNR or are promptly returned to the overcrowded territory they came from and ultimately shot and wasted by government officials at a later date; and "Whereas former natural bear habitat is currently wasted; today few bears if any remain to occupy

the former southern Ontario natural bear habitat; typical to northern Ontario swampland, bush lots, vacant pasture land and many landfill sites where waste food from: restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes and households currently gets buried. These sites could be used to feed excess bears now fighting for their survival in the north; and "Whereas relocating bears to former habitat is sound wildlife management practice; an important wildlife management practice exists, to relocate bears to areas of formerly occupied habit, that currently have few to no bears. Proven effective for other wildlife (elk, wild turkeys etc), therefore must also be given due consideration; "Now, therefore, be it resolved that I _____ petitions the Honorable David Ramsay, Minister of Natural Resources, to immediately move to reinstate the spring bear hunt; and further "The Minister move to initiate and enforce laws geared to protect black bears trying to return to their former range in southern Ontario, through the natural migration process; and further "The Minister move to develop ways and means to relocate bears from Northern Ontario to areas where the habitat would support them, specifically areas determined to be of suitable habit, formerly occupied by black bears in southern Ontario.

Note: As an Ontario resident voter I deserve and expect my elected Government to immediately take action on this extremely important and necessary request. Therefore I look forward to your positive confirmation via return correspondence.

Signature:

Name:

Address:

Postal Code:

Date: