

This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.nashuatelegraph.com
To print this article if a print dialogue does not open automatically, open the File menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

Article published Feb 12, 2007

Legislature should back Fish and Game proposal

Burt Cohen
New Castle

Hunters and anglers were the original conservationists, well before the rest of us. It has always been in their interest to preserve natural habitats of wildlife.

Now there are a lot fewer of them and many more of us. Yet they remain the sole source of funding for the Fish and Game Department, which is, by law, guardian of the state's fish, wildlife and marine resources.

Today the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department finds itself in deep fiscal trouble, which should be of real concern to everyone in the state, regardless of whether you fish, hunt or hike. Luckily, there is a potential solution the Legislature is now considering: HB 376.

This department starts at a disadvantage when compared to other state agencies. It is self-supporting and is required to pay for its operation through fees paid by the ever-dwindling number of hunters and anglers.

While the future economy of the state as a whole benefits from their essential work, bringing tourists and businesses, the source of funding is unquestionably drying up.

Our state's identity is unique. Beyond the presidential primary, New Hampshire is known as a largely unspoiled place with wilderness preserved.

This requires maintenance, which is performed by Fish and Game. We all benefit, yet very few pay.

The essence of HB 376 is that it would allocate approximately 4 percent of the rooms and meals tax revenue that now goes to the general fund and direct it to Fish and Game.

An estimated 7.4 percent of the rooms and meals tax is paid by hunters, anglers and wildlife watchers coming to enjoy our state's resources, so 4 percent is not at all unreasonable.

As a seven-term state senator (1990-04), I saw no other state agency that could demonstrate such a clear nexus between rooms and meals tax revenues and its mission.

We all love it when out-of-staters pay. The portion proposed is logical and prudent.

Fish and Game adds unquestioned value to our state. A wise investment from the general fund makes sense. Please call your legislator and urge support for HB 376.

© 2006, Telegraph Publishing Company, Nashua, New Hampshire