

RESOLUTION 54 - 16

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF CAPE CORAL URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO REINSTATE THE PROHIBITION ON BEAR HUNTING THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF FLORIDA AND FOCUS MORE ATTENTION ON REMOVING CONFLICTS BETWEEN BEARS AND SUBURBAN AREAS THROUGH DETERRENT TECHNIQUES; ALTERNATIVELY, URGING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION TO, AT A MINIMUM, PROHIBIT FUTURE BEAR HUNTS IN THE SOUTH REGION OF THE STATE; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the State Constitution, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (the "Commission") has regulatory and executive powers over wild animal life, which includes the regulation of bear hunting; and

WHEREAS, in June 2015, the Commission approved bear hunting in certain regions throughout the State of Florida, including the East Panhandle, North, Central and South regions, reversing the statewide ban on bear hunting in place since 1994; and

WHEREAS, the Commission approved bear hunting without the benefit of a statewide bear count that was slated for completion in 2016; and

WHEREAS, the killing of a total of 304 bears in just the first two days of a planned week-long hunt was documented during the 2015 season; and

WHEREAS, the first hunt in 21 years was ended early because the number of Florida black bears in the East Panhandle was three times the established quota and the number of bears killed in Central Florida exceeded the limit by nearly 40 percent; and

WHEREAS, accounts of unreported killings of bears, bears suffering a slow death, and the killing of lactating bears, which was forbidden, likely increased the death toll; and

WHEREAS, the black bear is the only bear found in Florida and is estimated to have a total population of approximately 3,000 throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the bear population is not sufficient to sustain hunting throughout the state, having been listed as a threatened species until 2012; and

WHEREAS, black bears tend to avoid confrontation with humans; and

WHEREAS, although the bears foraging for food may lead to their unintentional presence in suburban areas, precautionary methods may help prevent their return; and

WHEREAS, the Commission Director of Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, Thomas Eason, noted that the more than two decades of no bear hunting has made Florida black bears "relatively naïve" to the danger of hunters; and

WHEREAS, the Commission should prohibit bear hunting statewide and focus on providing "bear-proof garbage cans" and reducing palmetto berry harvests in bear habitats instead, as recommended by Leon County Circuit Judge George Reynolds III; and

WHEREAS, if the Commission insists on conducting a future bear hunt, the South region of the state, which includes the City of Cape Coral, should be excluded.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CAPE CORAL, FLORIDA, AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The Cape Coral City Council, on behalf of the City of Cape Coral and its citizens, urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to reinstate the prohibition on bear hunting throughout the State of Florida and focus more attention on removing conflicts between bears and suburban areas through deterrent techniques.

Section 2. Alternatively, the Cape Coral City Council urges the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to, at a minimum, prohibit future bear hunts in the South region of the State.

Section 3. The Cape Coral City Council directs the City Clerk to send a certified copy of this resolution to the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker, and the Commissioners and Executive Director of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

Section 4. The Cape Coral City Council directs the City's state lobbyists to advocate for the legislative action set forth in Sections 1 and 2 above, and authorizes the City Manager to amend the 2016 State Legislative Platform to include this item.

Section 5. This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CAPE CORAL AT ITS REGULAR COUNCIL SESSION THIS 18th DAY OF April, 2016.

Marni L. Sawicki
MARNI L. SAWICKI, MAYOR

VOTE OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS:

SAWICKI	<u>excused</u>	LEON	<u>NAY</u>
BURCH	<u>NAY</u>	ERBRICK	<u>NAY</u>
CARIOSCIA	<u>AYE</u>	WILLIAMS	<u>AYE</u>
STOUT	<u>AYE</u>	CODEN	<u>AYE</u>

ATTESTED TO AND FILED IN MY OFFICE THIS 27th DAY OF April, 2016.

Rebecca van Deutekom
REBECCA VAN DEUTEKOM,
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Dolores D. Menendez
DOLORES D. MENENDEZ
CITY ATTORNEY
Res\Support Bear Hunt Prohibition