

NO. 2016-238

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA REQUESTING THE FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION TO REFRAIN FROM APPROVING FUTURE BEAR HUNTS; REQUESTING THE INTERVENTION OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE STATE LEGISLATURE; INSTRUCTING THE CITY CLERK TO TRANSMIT THIS RESOLUTION TO CERTAIN PERSONS AND ENTITIES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of St. Petersburg and its citizens value environmental stewardship and the sustainable management of its natural resources, including wildlife; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, after 38 years as a protected species, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FFWC) removed the Florida black bear, the state's largest wild land mammal species, from Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species List; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the FFWC adopted a Bear Management Plan Rule (Rule) that was opposed by 75% of the approximately 40,000 comments received by citizens after the Rule was proposed; and

WHEREAS, the Rule includes a provision for an annual bear hunt that sets quotas based on incomplete data and outdated science regarding bear populations throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, the Rule further allows the FFWC to grant an unlimited number of permits, a mechanism that creates the inherent likelihood of the killing of more than the set quotas for bears; and

WHEREAS, this unsustainable outcome was observed when actual kill rates far exceeded the approved quotas in two of the four statewide Bear Management Units (BMUs) during the 2015 bear hunt; and

WHEREAS, according to the FFWC, during the 2015 hunt, 21% of the female bears that were killed were lactating, leaving orphaned cubs living in the wild as prey; and

WHEREAS, the FFWC permits feeding stations intended to feed game animals other than bears on private lands, which serves as bait for bears in all but name; and

WHEREAS, the decision to allow bear hunting was made, in part, based on limited negative interactions between humans and bears; and

WHEREAS, negative interactions could be minimized through more appropriate means than trophy hunting Florida black bears, including changing human behavior regarding proper food disposal methods and the dissemination of bear-proof garbage receptacles; and

WHEREAS, addressing habitat fragmentation by eliminating urban sprawl and supporting the expansion of large-tract wildlife corridors throughout Florida would be a far more humane and ecologically sensitive method of developing a long-term strategy for managing human and bear interactions; and

WHEREAS, continuing to allow bear hunts in Florida runs counter to the past efforts of the FFWC and many other Floridians to conserve this previously endangered or threatened species.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of St. Petersburg, Florida that the City Council does hereby respectfully request the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to refrain from approving future bear hunts.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council does hereby respectfully request that the Governor of the State of Florida and the State Legislature intervene as may be necessary to address the concerns stated herein.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council does hereby instruct the City Clerk to transmit copies of this Resolution to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission, Governor Rick Scott, Florida Senate President Andy Gardiner, and Florida Speaker of the House Steve Crisafulli.

This resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

Adopted at a regular session of the City Council held on the 2nd day of June, 2016.

ATTEST:


Chan Srinivasa, City Clerk


Amy Foster, Chair-Councilmember
Presiding Officer of the City Council

