



## Rulemaking Petition Summary Sheet

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### Response due date:

04/11/2025

### Agenda item:

A petition that asks the commission to begin rule making for the return of the Spring Black Bear Hunting Season.

### Presenter(s):

Stephanie Landry, Section Manager, Game Division, Wildlife Program.

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### Background summary:

The petitioner requests that, "In accordance with RCW 34.05.330, please accept this petition asking the Washington State Department of Fish & Wildlife to begin rulemaking for the RETURN of the Washington State Spring Black Bear Hunting Season." The petitioner states that these hunts should provide a limited number of permits in specific areas, and that these hunts would use harvest as a tool to manage issues like timber damage, ungulate depredation, and conflict. The petitioner supports WDFW prohibiting take of black bear cubs and females with cubs less than 1 year old or less than 50 pounds, as well as WDFW requiring the submission of biological samples and bear teeth. The petitioner references the lawsuit brought forward by The Sportsmen's Alliance and states that "spring bear hunting in Washington was canceled without providing sportsmen and the public the opportunity to provide meaningful comments". The petitioner then discusses that enforcement should respond to black bear human-safety cases but not conflict or depredation cases. The petitioner notes that the Department uses master hunters as needed for deer and elk conflict and depredation, and that the Department does not send enforcement to respond to those calls. The petitioner then explains that the Department should use hunters to assist with conflict and depredation calls rather than using enforcement officers. Finally, the request of this petition is to begin rulemaking for the return of the Washington State Spring Black Bear Hunting Season.

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### Staff recommendation:

This is a slightly revised petition request to begin rulemaking for the return of the spring black bear hunting season. The Department has received similar petitions multiple times per year from this petitioner since the Commission voted on November 18, 2022 to not approve recreational hunting of black bears in the spring. This repeat petition has been denied every time it has been brought forward, and it has been denied by both the Commission and the Director, once petitions were delegated. Due to the Commission's decision in 2022 to not approve recreational hunting of black bears in the spring, and the fact that the Department has no new information that would warrant a different decision, staff recommend denying this petition.

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### Policy issue(s) and expected outcome:

If the Director denies the petition, no rule making will take place to contemplate a spring black bear recreational hunting season.

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**Fiscal impacts of agency implementation:**

If the Director denies the petition and no rulemaking occurs, the fiscal impact of this decision is expected to be minimal.

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**Public involvement process used and what you learned:**

Not applicable.

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**Action requested and/or proposed next steps:**

The Wildlife Program recommends the petition be denied.

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**Post decision communications plan:**

WDFW will communicate the outcome of the Director's decision to the petitioner.

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