

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Forty-eighth Legislature
First Regular Session
2007

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2008

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO ALLOW THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH COMMISSION TO RECOVER THE KOFA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Congress of the United States of America:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge was created primarily in
4 response to concerns for historic declines in desert bighorn populations
5 throughout the west, and the refuge is critical to the health of desert
6 bighorn sheep; and

7 Whereas, the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge desert bighorn sheep
8 population has declined from 812 sheep in 2000 to 390 sheep in 2006, as
9 documented through extrapolation of data from surveys conducted by the
10 Arizona Game and Fish Commission and the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge; and

11 Whereas, the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge is the primary source of
12 desert bighorn sheep, mexicana subspecies, throughout the southwestern
13 portion of the United States; and

14 Whereas, the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge has served as the primary
15 resource for repatriation of desert bighorn sheep to mountain ranges in
16 Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado and has repatriated at least 513
17 desert bighorn sheep in 25 of the past 49 years since transplanting began;
18 and

19 Whereas, the decline in the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge sheep herd
20 coincides with periods of drought and a known increase in the resident
21 population of mountain lions on the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge; and

22 Whereas, the current population of Kofa desert bighorn sheep is
23 inadequate to support continuing repatriation; and

24 Whereas, failure to take immediate action will likely result in further
25 decline and threaten the viability of the Kofa herd; and

26 Whereas, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission has a trust
27 responsibility under title 17, Arizona Revised Statutes, to manage all
28 wildlife in Arizona; and

29 Whereas, although the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is
30 mandated to manage the natural resources of the Kofa National Wildlife
31 Refuge, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 which
32 provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall ensure effective
33 coordination, interaction and cooperation with the fish and wildlife agency
34 of the states in which the units of the system are located; and

35 Whereas, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission and Department are
36 recognized for their body of expertise relative to managing both desert
37 bighorn sheep and mountain lions, and immediate management action is needed
38 to secure the health and viability of the Kofa desert bighorn sheep
39 population.

40 Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of
41 Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

42 1. That the United States Congress take immediate action to reaffirm
43 the Arizona Game and Fish Department's position as the leading agency in the
44 management of nonmigratory and nonendangered state wildlife.

1 2. That the Arizona Game and Fish Commission employ, without any
2 unnecessary delays, burdens or obstacles, all management tools and measures
3 necessary to recover the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge desert bighorn sheep
4 population, including the management of predators, water developments, human
5 intervention and the potential for disease epizootics.

6 3. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies
7 of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of
8 the United States House of Representatives, each Member of Congress from the
9 State of Arizona and the Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.