

CONSERVATION COURIER

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE CONSERVATION COALITION OF OKLAHOMA



2017 Legislative Wrap-Up

The legislative session for 2017 is over and on behalf of the Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma (the Coalition) member organizations and board of directors, we are pleased to present the legislative wrap-up.

Gwendolyn Caldwell with Caldwell and Associates did a great job representing our interests at the Capitol this session and we are glad to have her on board.

Thanks to the statewide network of organizations and individuals that came together in 2017 the Coalition was able to act on many different pieces of legislation. Because of our victory on State Question 777, our presence at the Capitol has been enhanced and we have worked hard to maintain a responsible, thoughtful influence.

Coalition Legislative Highlights

Success: House Bill 2132

House Bill 2132 was a major concern for the Coalition and we worked hard against it. It would have established Prosperity Districts, where inside its boundaries, state laws, regulations, taxes, etc., would not apply unless they chose to adopt them. It did not pass, but is still alive and we will watch it very closely in 2018.

Loss: House Bill 1537

Creating the Water for 2060 Revolving Fund to promote efficient water use by municipalities. It failed to pass but is still alive and we will work to support it in next session.

[View the full update by clicking here.](#)

Additional Successes

SB0668

Supported by the Coalition and signed by Governor [Mary Fallin](#)

Sen. [Wayne Shaw](#), [Grove](#) and
Rep. [Josh West](#), [Grove](#)

States the Legislature's recognition that the primary purpose of the Scenic Rivers Act is to encourage the preservation of the areas designated as a scenic river area in their natural scenic state.

HB1356

Opposed by Coalition and did not pass

Rep. [Steve Kouplen](#), [Beggs](#)

Prohibits the [Department of Environmental Quality](#) (DEQ) from disseminating rules or instituting regulations more stringent than those provided by the Environmental Protection Agency or by federal laws. The state of Oklahoma should be allowed to make stronger laws than the federal government in order to offer greater protections to our

HB1009

Opposed by Coalition and did not pass

Rep. [Bobby Cleveland](#), [Slaughterville](#)

Prohibits a game warden from entering private property for the purpose of enforcing the provisions of the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Code based solely on the discharge of a firearm. This hinders the [Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation's](#) (ODWC) ability to identify and apprehend poachers.

HB1852

Opposed by Coalition and did not pass

Rep. [Leslie Osborn](#), [Mustang](#)

Provides guidelines and an outline that would allow the state to sell, lease, or transfer [Grand River Dam Authority](#) (GRDA). The [Scenic Rivers Commission](#) (SRC) was moved to GRDA in 2016 so the sale of GRDA could potentially be harmful to ensuring the long term support and proper funding of the SRC.

land and water.

HB2001

Coalition Opposed and did not pass

Rep. [Rick West](#), [Heavener](#) and
Sen. [Mark Allen](#), [Spiro](#)

Bill would allow anyone who holds a lifetime hunting license from being required to purchase attach a tag to a killed bear. Oklahoma has a very small bear population and this would hinder the ability to manage the number of bears hunted each year.

HB2132

Opposed by Coalition and did not pass

Rep. [Charles McCall](#), [Atoka](#) and
Sen. [Greg Treat](#), [Oklahoma City](#)

Authorizes the governor to enter into prosperity compacts. These are “no regulation” zones that would allow businesses to pollute the air and water in the zone. Runoff from these areas could be devastating to the urban or rural areas adjacent to the zone impacting the water, air, wildlife habitat as well as the general health of neighboring individuals.

[View the full update by clicking here.](#)

Looking forward

Next year we will have the opportunity to push for HB1537. Having an opportunity to get a proactive meaningful water conservation bill will take all hands on deck and may take multiple attempts.

Working against any type of similar bill to a prosperity district bill like HB2132 will be a top priority. Often these bills take slightly changed form in following years and take a lot of effort to kill.

A special thanks to [Trout Unlimited](#) – without the engagement of this Coalition member group, Prosperity Districts might have been a reality.

Learn more about the successes and losses of this year's legislative session by [visiting our website](#).

