



Conservation Affairs Network Policy Toolkit

SECTION 5: POLICY PROCESSES AND
WHERE TO ENGAGE

5.1 U.S. STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED

Your advocacy efforts are key to helping shape both state and federal laws and budgets. There are many points in the legislative process at which you can become involved - from the drafting and introduction of a bill to its passage and enactment into law. The importance of getting involved cannot be overstated; most legislators know very little about wildlife related issues and the impact their policies can have on wildlife conservation and wildlife professionals. They have much to learn from you as a wildlife professional who is intimately familiar with the issues.

It is important to remember that your state and federal representatives work for you and the other constituents in their district. They are elected by a majority of their constituents and remain interested in local issues and how they can work to benefit the community. Most also want to be re-elected and recognize the need to keep constituents happy. At the same time, they must balance competing interests, including the need to support effective programs while remaining fiscally responsible.

The following is a summary of the typical legislative process for bills and suggestions on how you can become more involved in the process at each step. The legislative process is generally the same at both the state and federal level, with the obvious exception that the process ends with either the President (federal) or the Governor (state).

Please note there is variation in legislative processes and terms from state to state. Every state legislature has a website with information about the legislative process in that state. See Appendix G for direct links to state legislature websites.

1. Bill Drafting:

Legislators often work with advocates to craft the language that will be included in legislation or to draft amendments to a bill that has already been introduced. This type of partnership is most common and successful when advocates have an existing relationship with a legislator. Prior to introduction, a legislator may also work with an independent legislative agency, known as the Office of Legislative Counsel at the U.S. federal level, to ensure the proposed language conforms with existing formatting requirements and has the intended effect. Legislators may also seek out any technical edits from the relevant government agency targeted in the legislation.

Getting Involved:

Units can go to a friendly legislator and request that a bill be drafted to fund programs or projects, address a problem, change policy, etc. Units can also work with legislators to influence proposed or existing bill language.



2. Bill Introduction:

When bills are formally introduced, they are assigned a bill number and referred to committee(s). Generally, bills can be introduced in either chamber (House or Senate on the U.S. federal level).

Visit your state or the federal legislature's website to learn more about which bills are currently being introduced (See Appendix G). Once you access the website you can find a specific bill using the bill's assigned number or text in the bill. You can also find out to which committee(s) it has been referred.

Getting Involved:

When favorable legislation is introduced, units can issue a press release and/or write letters applauding the bill's introduction. Legislators appreciate public acknowledgment of their work, especially when it comes from constituents and is shared with others in their district.

Units can also reach out to the office(s) introducing the legislation to see if they would like help in courting cosponsors on the bill. See Section 3 for additional information on mechanisms for making your "ask" to offices.

If unfavorable legislation is introduced, it is better to submit your suggested changes to the bill once it is in committee – see next step.

3. Bills Referred to Committee(s) of Jurisdiction

Most of the work done on a bill happens in committee; ***this is the most common and effective stage at which to take action on the proposed bill.*** Committee Chairs and Ranking Members decide which bills will receive the most attention. Committees may hold hearings on a bill, propose and adopt amendments, and vote on approval of a bill—or they can let a bill die by failing to take any action before the conclusion of a legislative session. If a bill is voted on and approved at the committee level, it is reported out to the full chamber for consideration. For hearings, advocates may be asked to suggest witnesses and may be asked for input on witness testimony.

House committees that interact regularly with legislation affecting wildlife and wildlife professionals include:

- *House Natural Resources Committee* – This committee deals with legislation pertaining to federally-managed lands federal fish and wildlife management, and oversight of Department of the Interior activities.
- *House Agriculture Committee* – The scope of this committee includes oversight of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, including federal forestry and Farm Bill conservation programs.
- *House Appropriations Committee* – See Chapter 5.2 for a detailed overview of the appropriations process.



Committees of interest in the Senate are somewhat similar to those in the House, although scope and jurisdiction are not always identical. Relevant Senate committees include:

- *Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works* – Administers the Endangered Species Act, Migratory Bird Treaty Act, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, and Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act.
- *Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources* – Provides oversight on federally-managed lands and administers the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
- *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry* – Similar in scope to the House Agriculture Committee
- *Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation* – Interacts with coastal management programs, federally-listed marine species, commercial fisheries management, and certain USGS science programs.
- *Senate Committee on Appropriations* – Equivalent to the House Appropriations Committee

Getting Involved:

A common and effective way to influence the content of a bill is to write a letter to the appropriate committee while the bill is under consideration. (See Section 3.3) You may also consider meeting directly with members of the legislature who serve in important or influential roles on the committee. In person meetings can be very effective at expressing your position and hearing feedback from the member and their staff on the proposed legislation.

Advocates may also write to Committee members and encourage a hearing on a bill that is important to them. Advocates may prepare oral and/or written testimony to deliver at hearings. Advocates may also provide suggested questions or comments for a friendly legislator on the committee to ask of witnesses. It is also important to recruit fellow advocates or allies to pack hearings on wildlife related budgets and key legislation.

4. Floor Action on a Bill

Bills reported out of committee are placed on the House or Senate calendar for debate by the full chamber. This scheduling is done at the U.S. federal level by the House Speaker or Senate Majority Leader. Legislators that support and oppose a bill are given a chance to speak about the bill during the debate. If the bill is not placed on the chamber's calendar, no action would be taken on the bill and it is effectively dead. When debate concludes, a vote is taken to either approve or defeat a bill.

After the legislation is determined appropriate for floor consideration and prior to debate, members of the legislative body's Rules Committee will meet to determine the confines of



debate for the legislation. This process includes determining what amendments to the legislation can be considered and voted on while on the floor.

Getting Involved:

Units have the opportunity to contact key legislators in advance of a floor vote to ask them to vote and/or speak in support or opposition to a bill. Units can also reach out to offices to recommend a certain vote on any amendments to the legislation proposed on the floor.

5. Conference Committee

Sometimes similar, but not identical, bills pass both legislative chambers. When this happens, a conference committee must be formed to reconcile the differences in the bills. Once differences are resolved, each legislative body must again vote to approve the modified legislation.

Getting Involved:

Units can reach out to legislative leadership to request the appointment of friendly legislators to the conference committee. Prior to this action, units should reach out to those friendly offices to ensure they are aware of the request.

Once members of the conference committee are determined, units can reach out to conference committee members highlighting any support or opposition to specific language ending up in the final, agreed upon version of the bill.

6. Action by the Governor/President

When a Governor/President receives a bill they may sign the bill into law, veto the bill or veto and send it back to the legislature with suggestions for reconsideration, or take no action (in some states that will lead to the bill becoming law after a specific period of time). If the Governor/President vetoes a bill, the legislature may override that decision, typically by a two-thirds vote in both legislative bodies.

Getting Involved:

Bills for which the Governor/President signals some reluctance about signing, advocates may write letters or op-eds and/or issue a press release to help sway the decision. When an important, favorable bill is signed into law, advocates may issue a press release and have members attend a signing ceremony, if one is held. This helps build goodwill and generates positive publicity for elected officials.



5.2 U.S. FEDERAL BUDGETING PROCESS

The U.S. federal budgeting process begins the first Monday in February of each year and is intended to conclude by October 1st, the start of the federal fiscal year.

Step 1: The Executive Budget

Purpose: The President is responsible for submitting a detailed budget request to Congress in February. Estimated levels of spending, revenue, and borrowing are broken down for the coming fiscal year, serving as a template for congressional action.

Process: Assembling the budget is a long administrative process involving each individual agency and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). OMB and the agencies develop priorities and list the funding levels needed to maintain or improve individual programs and expenses.

Getting Involved:

Contact agencies as they are formulating budget requests for the upcoming year. This process starts long before February so make sure to start communication early, ideally no later than September of the year prior. Promote your priorities including individual programs and overall strategies to each agency and the OMB personnel working with priority agencies.

Step 2: The Concurrent Budget Resolution

Purpose: Congress is responsible for developing the concurrent budget resolution which governs the rest of the budget process by setting limits on total levels of revenue and spending. The resolution is where Congress expresses its economic goals for the upcoming fiscal year and for the next four years.

Process: The Budget Committees of the House and Senate use the President's budget request, testimony from agencies, and forecasts from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to set a total level of budget authority called the 302(a) allocation level. When the House and Senate have developed their respective resolutions, a conference committee must reconcile the differences. The resolution is required by law to be passed by both chambers by April 15, though this rarely is the case. In reality, this step, along with steps 3 and 4 below, often occur concurrently or out of order entirely.

Getting Involved:

Contact members of Congress on the Budget Committee or on the conference committee showing support for a resolution that supports natural resource funding.

Step 3: Setting Spending Allocations

Purpose: Congress must agree on spending allocations, or limits to how much money can be spent on discretionary programs during the coming fiscal year and the next four years. The



allocations ensure that Congress is holding to the budget resolution. Discretionary funding refers specifically to money provided each year through the appropriations process.*

Process: The House and Senate Appropriations committees divide up the money specified in the concurrent budget resolution into separate appropriations bills. The subcommittees that produce each appropriations bill must use this allocation as a total dollar ceiling for all of the agencies and programs in their jurisdiction. These are called 302(b) allocations.

Getting Involved:

Contact members of Congress on the Appropriations committee. Encourage higher allocations for the appropriations bills that deal with natural resources. The two main natural resources bills are the ones that fund the Interior Department and Agriculture Department (see step 4).

Step 4: Developing Appropriations Bills

Purpose: Appropriations bills set the amount of money specific departments, agencies, and programs receive for a given fiscal year.

Process: Each Appropriations subcommittee is responsible for a set of departments, agencies, and programs and writes one bill each year that divides up their 302(b) allocation into line items for each program. Each bill is drafted, amended, goes through markup, and is voted on by the relevant subcommittee. The full Appropriations committee then holds a hearing to approve and amend the subcommittee bill. There are 12 Appropriations subcommittees and 12 subsequent bills per chamber. The Subcommittees and related bills are:

1. Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and related agencies
2. Commerce, Justice, Science, and related agencies
3. Defense
4. Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies
5. Financial Services and General Government
6. Homeland Security
7. Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
8. Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
9. Legislative Branch
10. Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies
11. State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
12. Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies



The Appropriations Committees that address natural resources are:

House

- [Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies](#)
- [Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies](#)

Senate

- [Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies](#)
- [Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies](#)

Getting Involved:

Contact Appropriations subcommittee (Agriculture and Interior) and full committee members as they hold hearings and markups on the bills. Make sure to identify and support specific aspects of the bills as well as funding levels that line up with your priorities. Find other organizations that have similar funding priorities and work together to send coalition letters that represent diverse groups and individuals.

Many members of Congress will have forms available on their website for units to provide information on specific funding requests and the relevance of the request to their state or district. Even if members of Congress in your unit are not members of the Appropriations Committee, it can still be worthwhile to conduct outreach via these forms in order to inform the office's individual funding requests to the committee.

Some members of Congress also provide forms for constituent-level organizations to make requests for Congressionally-Directed Spending, also known as earmarks. Members of Congress can request earmark language that directs funds to be spent on specific projects located within their state or district. Units aware of conservation projects requiring funding that fall within the geographic jurisdiction of a given member of Congress may find it worthwhile to conduct outreach via Congressionally-Directed Spending forms (if available) or via direct outreach to offices.

Step 5: Passing the Appropriations Bills

Purpose: Each appropriations bill must be approved by both chambers.

Process: After Senate and House Appropriations committees approve each of the twelve appropriations bills in their respective chambers, the full Senate and House vote to approve them. Once each bill passes each chamber, conference committees made up of both chambers must reconcile the differences and develop a bill that both chambers can then vote to approve. Congress is required to have given final approval to all 12 spending bills by October 1 (the start of the new Fiscal Year), although this deadline is rarely met.



Getting Involved:

Contact members of Congress on the conference committee. Support the versions of each provision in a given appropriations bill (House or Senate) that most closely aligns with your unit's natural resource priorities.

Step 6: Presidential Approval of Appropriations Bills

Purpose: As an executive check on the legislative branch, the President can decide to veto or approve the appropriations bills. While each bill can reach the President's desk as standalone legislation, Congress can also compile a subset of the twelve bills into one legislative package for consideration.

Process: The President has ten days in which to decide:

- a) To sign an appropriations bill, thereby making it law;
- b) To veto the bill, thereby sending it back to Congress and requiring much of the process to begin again with respect to the programs covered by that bill; or
- c) To allow the bill to become law without their signature after 10 days, thereby making it law but doing so without their express approval.

Step 7: The Bill Becomes Law

If the process goes as planned, all 12 spending bills have been signed by the President and become Public Law by October 1st, the start of the new Fiscal Year. Since 2011, the October 1st deadline has not been met and Congress has had to pass a Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government. A CR, for the most part, allows programs to continue with the same amount of funding as the year before while Congress works to approve new appropriations bills. If a CR cannot be passed and the 12 Appropriations bills are not approved, then the Federal government is shutdown.

* Programs that use discretionary funds are funded each year through the Appropriations process. When the program is enacted by law, a funding level, or Authorization, is set by the law. Authorizations are the maximum amount of money that is legally allowed to be spent by the program. Every year, these discretionary programs are appropriated money through Appropriations bills; the amount of money appropriated can vary each year. Mandatory programs are not funded through annual appropriations bills; spending for mandatory programs is dictated by the laws that created the programs (e.g. Social Security) and cannot be altered by the annual budgeting process described here.



5.3 U.S. AND CANADIAN FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES AGENCIES

U.S. Federal Government Agencies

Department of Agriculture

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service -

The [Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service](#) (APHIS) provides leadership in ensuring the health and care of animals and plants. APHIS improves agricultural productivity and competitiveness and contributes to the national economy and the public health.

Programs of Interest: APHIS Wildlife Services - Wildlife Damage Management, Methods Development

Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Farm Service Agency -

The [Farm Service Agency](#) (FSA) implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster and farm marketing programs through a national network of offices.

Programs of Interest: Conservation Reserve Program (CRP); Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)

Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Forest Service -

The [Forest Service](#) (USFS) administers programs for applying sound conservation and utilization practices to natural resources of the national forests and grasslands, for promoting these practices on all forest lands through cooperation with states and private landowners, and for carrying out extensive forest and range research. USFS manages 193 million acres of public lands in 43 states and Puerto Rico.

Programs of Interest: Integrated Resource Restoration Program; Forest and Rangeland Research; Wildlife and Fisheries Habitat

Appropriations: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

National Institute of Food and Agriculture -

The [National Institute of Food and Agriculture](#) (NIFA), formally the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), works in partnership with land-grant universities and other public and private organizations to provide the focus to advance a global system of extramural research, extension, and higher education in the food and agricultural sciences.



Programs of Interest: Renewable Resources Extension Act; McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program

Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Natural Resource Conservation Service -

The [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

Programs of Interest: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP); Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP); Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP); Healthy Forest Reserve Program; Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Appropriations: Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management -

The [Bureau of Land Management](#) (BLM) manages 247 million of public lands located primarily in the 12 western states, including Alaska. BLM manages an additional 700 million acres of below ground mineral estate located throughout the country. These lands were originally valued for the commodities extracted from them. Today the public also prizes them for their recreational opportunities and the natural, historical, and cultural resources they contain.

Programs of Interest: Wildlife and Fisheries Management; Wild Horse and Burro Management

Appropriations: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

National Park Service -

The [National Park Service](#) (NPS) preserves the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park System comprises 401 areas covering more than 84 million acres across every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. NPS cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.

Appropriations: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service -

The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (FWS) is the only agency of the U.S. Government whose primary responsibility is fish, wildlife, and plant conservation. FWS helps protect a healthy



environment for people, fish, and wildlife, and helps Americans conserve and enjoy the outdoors. FWS' major responsibilities are for migratory birds, endangered species, certain marine mammals, and freshwater and anadromous fish. FWS manages 307 million acres of lands and waters across the U.S.

Programs of Interest: State and Tribal Wildlife Grants; National Wildlife Refuge System; North Americans Wetlands Conservation Act; Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program; Ecological Services Program; Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program, Science Application Program

Appropriations: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

U.S. Geological Survey -

The [U.S. Geological Survey](#) (USGS) serves as an independent fact-finding agency that collects, monitors, analyzes, and provides scientific understanding about natural resource conditions, issues, and problems. The value of the USGS rests on its ability to conduct studies on a national scale and to sustain long-term monitoring and assessment of natural resources. Because it has no regulatory or management mandate, the USGS provides impartial science that serves the needs of our changing world.

Programs of Interest: Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Units; National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers, Ecosystems Science Centers, National Wildlife Health Center

Appropriations: Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

Canadian Federal Government Agencies

[Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change](#)

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada -

The [Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada](#) (COSEWIC) determines the national status of wild Canadian species, subspecies, varieties or other units that are suspected of being at risk of extinction or extirpation. COSEWIC uses a process based on science and Aboriginal or community knowledge to assess wildlife species at risk. The 31 voting members of COSEWIC include a Co-chair from each of the 10 Species Specialist subcommittees and a Co-chair from the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Subcommittee, one member from each of the 13 provincial and territorial governments, one member from each of four Federal agencies (Canadian Wildlife Service, Parks Canada Agency, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Museum of Nature), and three non-government science members.

Environment Canada -

Directly and/or through partnership arrangements, [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#) establishes and manages National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries for the conservation of habitat to protect migratory birds, species at risk and other species



of national interest. National Wildlife Areas and Migratory Bird Sanctuaries can be established in either terrestrial or marine environments.

Environment Canada also includes the Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) which handles wildlife matters that are the responsibility of the federal government. These include the protection and management of migratory birds, nationally significant wildlife habitat, endangered species, control of international trade in endangered species, and research on wildlife issues of national importance.

Parks Canada -

[Parks Canada](#) establishes and manages [National Parks](#) and [National Marine Conservation Areas](#), which are intended to protect a representative sample of Canada's 39 terrestrial natural regions and 29 marine regions and to provide opportunities for public education and enjoyment.

Ministry of Natural Resources

Natural Resources Canada -

[Natural Resources Canada](#) (NRCan) is primarily responsible for overseeing the management of Canada's forests and timber industry. NRCan also manages issues related to climate change and is responsible for the federal government's response plans regarding climate change and adaptation.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs

This department is overseen by both the minister of Crown-Indigenous relations and the minister of northern affairs. Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) is responsible for the management of natural resources in Canada's northern lands and territories including oil and gas operations, and for coordinating government responsibilities between Canada, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans

Fisheries and Oceans Canada-

[Fisheries and Oceans Canada](#) (DFO) is charged with managing all of Canada's fisheries and aquaculture operations, as well as overseeing navigability of Canada's waterways and the operations of the Canadian Coast Guard. DFO also plays a key role in marine mammal management, and interacts directly with the [Species at Risk Act](#) to engage in the management and recovery of [aquatic species at risk](#).



5.4 CANADIAN FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

Your advocacy efforts are key to helping shape both provincial and federal laws and budgets. There are many points in the legislative process at which you can become involved - from the introduction of a bill to its passage and enactment into law. The importance of getting involved cannot be overstated; most legislators know very little about wildlife related issues and the impact their policies can have on wildlife conservation and wildlife professionals. They have much to learn from you as a wildlife professional intimately familiar with the issues.

It is important to remember that your provincial and federal representatives work for you and the other constituents in their district. Members of the House of Commons (MPs) are elected by a majority of their constituents and remain interested in local issues and how they can work to benefit the community. Most also want to be re-elected and recognize the need to keep constituents happy. At the same time, they must balance competing interests, including the need to support effective programs while remaining fiscally responsible.

The following is a summary of the typical legislative process for bills and suggestions on how you can become more involved in the process at each step. The legislative process is generally the same at both the provincial and federal level, with the key exception that the federal Parliament is a bicameral legislature, meaning there are two legislative bodies: the House of Commons and the Senate. In order for federal legislation to be enacted, it must be passed by a majority in each body. Provincial legislative branches, by contrast, are unicameral as there is only one legislative body (referred to as the legislative assembly, national assembly, or house of assembly) for bills to go through.

Please note there is some variation in the legislative process from province to province. Every provincial legislature has a website with information about the legislative process in that province. Links to provincial legislature websites are provided in Appendix G

1. Legislation Introduced:

Most legislation originates with the Government in the form of a policy proposal, submitted to the Cabinet by the Minister(s). Legislation in the House of Commons consists of either public bills, which relate to national-level issues and interests, or private bills, which affect powers and exemptions applying to individuals and/or corporations. Public bills proposed by Cabinet Ministers are known as government bills, while those proposed by MPs are known as private members' bills.

- a) If the Cabinet approves a policy proposal, the responsible Ministry issues drafting instructions to the Legislation Section of the Department of Justice.
- b) Draft bills are prepared in two official languages and then approved by the responsible Minister and the Cabinet prior to being introduced in Parliament.



Getting Involved:

Units can go to a friendly MP and request that a bill be drafted to fund programs or projects, address a problem, change policy, etc. Units can also work with MPs to influence proposed or existing bill language.

2. First Reading:

The Member or Minister performs a first reading in either the Senate or the House of Commons. At this point, the bill is printed and considered formally introduced and is given a number: C-# for House bills and S-# for Senate bills. Only the House can introduce legislation concerned with raising or spending funds.

Getting Involved:

When favorable legislation is introduced, units can issue a press release and/or write letters applauding the bill's introduction. Legislators appreciate public acknowledgment of their work, especially when it comes from constituents and is shared with others in their district.

If unfavorable legislation is introduced, it is better to submit your suggested changes to the bill once it is in committee – see step 4.

3. Second Reading:

The Second reading occurs in the House or Senate, wherever the bill was first introduced. During this reading, the principle of the bill is debated. The motion for second reading may be amended in only 3 ways:

1. A three or six months' hoist, which seeks to postpone consideration of the bill for three or six months;
2. A reasoned amendment, which requests that the House not give second reading to a bill for a specific reason; or
3. A motion to refer the subject matter of the bill to a committee.

A Minister may also move that a bill be referred to a committee before second reading. This allows members of a committee to examine the principle of a bill before approval by the House and to propose amendments to alter its scope. The resultant next stage is a combination of the report stage and the second reading.

Getting Involved:

If unfavorable legislations are introduced, speak to your MP to request that the bill not be given a second reading.

4. Consideration in Committee

Once adopted, the Bill is referred to a legislative, standing, or special committee, or to the Committee of the Whole.



Committee Steps

1. Consideration of the bill through a clause-by-clause study.
2. Hearings may be held in which witnesses and experts are summoned to provide the Committee with information and help in improving the bill.
3. Each committee can hold a “mark-up” session during which it makes recommended revisions and additions.
4. After the bill has been reviewed and amended, committee staff prepares a written report explaining why they favor the bill, and what amendments were made (if any).
5. The Committee provides this report to the House and the House considers the amendments proposed and votes for or against them.

In the House of Commons, committees that regularly interact with legislation concerning wildlife include:

- Committee on Natural Resources (RNNR) – Provides oversight on the Department of Natural Resources (NRCan)
- Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) – Oversees operations covered by the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNAC) and the Department of Indigenous Services (ISC)
- Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (ENVI) – Oversees the activities of Environment and Climate Change Canada and Parks Canada. Administers environmental legislation including the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, the Species at Risk Act, the Migratory Bird Convention Act, and the Canada Wildlife Act
- Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) – Interacts with any legislation affecting Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Canadian Coast Guard
- Committee on Government Operations and Estimates (OGGO) – Roughly equivalent to the US House Appropriations Committee

In the Canadian Senate, committees of interest include:

- Committee on Energy, the Environment, and Natural Resources (ENEV) – Interacts with legislation relating to Canada’s National Parks, migratory bird protections, threatened wildlife, and the Species at Risk Act
- Committee on Agriculture and Forestry (AGFO) – Legislation impacting federally-managed forests
- Committee on Aboriginal Peoples (APPA) – Similar jurisdiction to INAN in the House of Commons



- Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (POFO) – Similar jurisdiction to FOPO in the House of Commons
- Committee on Internal Economy, Budgets, and Administration (CIBA) – Similar to the Senate Committee on Appropriations in the U.S., and OGGO in the House of Commons

Getting Involved:

A common and effective way to influence the content of a bill is to write a letter to the committee while the bill is under consideration. (See Section 3.3 for tips on writing letters to legislators) You may also consider meeting directly with MPs or Senators, as appropriate, who serve in important or influential roles on the committee. In person meetings can be very effective at expressing your position and hearing feedback from the member and their staff on the proposed legislation.

Units may also write to Committee members and encourage a hearing on a bill that is important to them. Advocates may prepare oral and/or written testimony to deliver at hearings. Advocates may also provide suggested questions or comments for a friendly legislator on the committee to ask of witnesses. It is also important to recruit fellow advocates or allies to pack hearings on wildlife related budgets and key legislation.

5. Third Reading

This reading is the last opportunity for the House to amend the bill. The House debates and votes on the final bill as amended and the bill is printed for the last time. Once the bill has been passed it is sent to the other House (i.e. if passed in the House, it is referred to the Senate) and the process starts again from the first reading.

Getting Involved:

Advocates can contact MPs or Senators directly with suggestions to improve the bill for wildlife.

6. Conference Committee

If language within House and Senate bills differs, the House may elect to accept the Senate's amendments. If the House does not agree with the Senate, it can adopt a motion stating the reason for disagreement. If the Senate wishes to alter the amendment, it sends a message back to the House, which then accepts or rejects the proposed changes.

If an agreement cannot be reached through this exchange, the Parliamentary House with possession of the bill can request a conference. The objective of the Conference Committee is to reach a compromise – which must be approved by both the House and the Senate. Although this practice is available, it has fallen into disuse.



Historically the Senate has reviewed legislation from a less partisan standpoint, and is likely to pass bills that the House proposes.

Getting Involved:

See section 4 (above) for suggestions on how to interact with Committee members.

7. Royal Assent

After a bill has cleared both the House and Senate (in the same form), it is presented to the Governor General for assent. Royal assent refers to the method by which any constitutional monarch formally approves an act of their nation's parliament, making it into law. The Governor General may assent the bill in the Queen's name, withhold assent, or reserve assent. In the provinces royal assent takes place in the House or in the chambers of the Lieutenant Governor.

8. The Bill Becomes a Law

Once the Governor General gives a bill Royal Assent it becomes a law and is assigned an official Chapter number (i.e. Bill C-7 became Chapter 1 of the Statutes of Canada, 2000).

Getting Involved:

When an important, favorable bill is signed into law, units may issue a press release and pack a signing ceremony, if one is held. This helps build goodwill and generates positive publicity for elected officials.

Units may also wish to give an award to legislators or other elected officials who support their work and mission. Elected officials need to know when they are doing something favorable just as much as when they are doing something unfavorable.

Most importantly, all laws are effected through the subsequent drafting and enactment of regulations and program spending. The impacts of laws on wildlife and wildlife professionals can be influenced significantly at these junctures. In fact it can be argued that engaging with the development of regulations and spending plans is at least as important, if not more so, than the wording of the law itself as these points dictate on-the-ground implementation of the law.



5.5 CANADIAN FEDERAL BUDGETING PROCESS

Canada's annual federal budget cycle begins following a recess of Parliament in June of each year. The federal budget sets the government's fiscal agenda for the coming year, and lays out a plan for how priorities will be addressed to fulfill that agenda.

Step 1: Cabinet Budget Preparation

Purpose: The Cabinet is tasked with reviewing information on the federal economic and fiscal outlook, public issues/concerns, and any likely fiscal policy or major government priorities for the coming year, to help inform agency and department budget preparations later in the process.

Process: Two Cabinet retreats occur between June and September, where the Cabinet engages in discussions around major fiscal priorities for the coming year. The Minister of Finance is responsible for providing reports and key policy areas to inform these discussions.

Getting Involved:

Contact ministers to promote your priorities (e.g. increased funding for specific programs, broader department strategies, etc.) during the budget preparation process.

Step 2: Pre-Budget Consultation

Purpose: Budget consultation incorporates needs and feedback from central agencies and departments, provincial finance ministers, the Standing Committee on Finance (Standing Committee), and members of the public, into a final budget strategy.

Process: The Standing Committee facilitates public participation in the federal budgeting process with a call to all interested parties to submit their thoughts on federal spending priorities during budget consultation. Input received during the consultation process, recommendations made by the Standing Committee, and proposed needs identified by central and provincial agencies and departments, are utilized by the Minister of Finance to create the final budget strategy.

Getting Involved:

Submit requests for funding of relevant legislation and programs during the pre-budget consultation process. Template language or guiding questions are often provided to help craft these requests. Requests may entail calls for specific funding allocations to agency and department programs, or broader calls for the implementation of new policy or amendments to existing legislation.



Step 3: Review and Approval of Budget

Purpose: The Minister of Finance and Prime Minister must approve a final Budget strategy following a review of the strategy by the Cabinet. Budget estimates are presented to Parliament for debate and final allocation.

Process: As part of the approval of the Budget strategy, the Department of Finance produces estimates of funding allocations required to meet the policy priorities identified for the upcoming year. This information is reviewed for approval by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. This process typically culminates with the Minister of Finance's Budget Speech, which formally announces the government's Budget. The main estimates presented in the government's Budget are immediately tabled for debate and review by the House of Commons and all relevant subcommittees.

Step 4: Appropriations Acts for Main and Supplemental Estimates.

Purpose: Estimated allocations within the Budget are reviewed within the House of Commons to inform all necessary Appropriations Acts. Appropriations Acts are reviewed and passed by both chambers of Parliament before being presented to the Crown for final assent.

Process: All relevant standing Committees within the House of Commons review the detailed estimates included in the federal Budget. Although standing committees do not have the power to increase these estimates, they may vote to approve, reject, or decrease them. This review must be completed by May 31st of each year.

Concurrent with standing committee review of Budget estimates, the Secretary of the Treasury Board produces Appropriation Act No. 1, an interim supply bill to fund the government in between the tabling of the Estimates and May 31. Appropriation Act No. 2 will then allocate the remaining funds required to meet the agreed-upon Estimates.

Getting Involved:

Contact your Members of Parliament during their review of the Appropriations Acts to provide input on specific program allocations contained within the bills.

