

December 13, 2021

Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

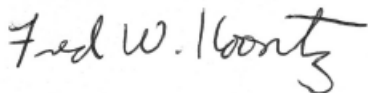
This letter confirms my resignation from the Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission effective December 13, 2021.

Last January, I accepted your appointment with the understanding that I would participate in the Commission's supervising authority and policymaking to oversee the Fish & Wildlife Department's actions. Especially key to me and many Washingtonians are the Commission's conservation-related decisions that safeguard the state's biodiversity for current and future generations.

Unfortunately, I found that I had no meaningful role in protecting the public's wildlife trust. The Commission is currently stuck in a politicized quagmire. We have largely lost the ability to have civil public conversations. This is not the kind of environment in which I thrive. I hope that your future appointments to the Commission can be better politicians than me, as I am a conservation biologist at heart. I urge you to fill all the open Commission seats as rapidly as possible.

Despite my personal disappointment, I still believe significant progress can be accomplished toward protecting Washington's fish and wildlife in the coming months and years. While I questioned the Department's leadership on a number of their decisions, please know that I was inspired by the deep dedication and character of the Department's 1,900 employees. Finally, listening to all sides of the public testimonies at Commission meetings also is a sign that the public cares.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred W. Koontz". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fred W. Koontz, Ph.D.
WA Fish & Wildlife Commission

Cc: Larry Carpenter, Chair, WA Fish & Wildlife Commission; Jamila Thomas, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor; JT Austin, Senior Policy Advisor, Natural Resources, Office of the Governor; Ambar Algera, Director of Boards and Commissions, Office of the Governor.