



Oppose Confirmation of Molly Linville and Jim Anderson to the Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

Washington Wildlife First urges opposition to the confirmation of Molly Linville and Jim Anderson as Washington Fish and Wildlife commissioners. **These reappointments:**

1. Flip the Balance of the Commission to Prioritize Exploitation over Protection

- Until recently, Washington was a beacon of light in a world growing progressively darker for wildlife. **We were on the verge of an independent Fish and Wildlife Commission that would be more than just a rubber stamp for [Kelly Susewind](#)**, the director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), with commissioners who prioritized the interests of Washingtonians and the future of fish and wildlife over the demands of consumptive special interests.
- Last year's appointments, including the reappointment of Linville and Anderson, returned the Commission to the control of consumptive and commercial interests. Anderson is a lifelong angler and hunter, and Linville is a hunter and a rancher. **Together, they have the worst voting records on the Commission for protecting wildlife.**
- Both consistently vote in favor of commercial and trophy hunting interests at the expense of wildlife, including **weakening protections for endangered and threatened state species** such as salmon and steelhead, the gray wolf, white pelican, and Columbia River white-tailed deer.
- Both **opposed a ban on deer and elk baiting**, even in light of the threat from Chronic Wasting Disease, for fear of how hunters would react. As a result, the Commission did not take any action to limit deer and elk baiting until *after* CWD was confirmed in Washington in 2025.
- Both **approved increases in bear and cougar hunting in 2019-20 beyond levels that WDFW scientists said were sustainable** and opposed a 2023 rulemaking petition aimed at reducing bear and cougar mortality to sustainable levels. In 2021, **they voted to continue recreational spring bear hunting, and after the hunt was banned, voted at least five times to bring it back.**

2. Satisfy Out-of-State Trophy Hunters at the Expense of Washington Values

- Linville and Anderson were reappointed **to satisfy the demands of out-of-state special interests aligned with the NRA**, including the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance and HOWL for Wildlife. These far-right groups have been emboldened by the Trump administration's campaign to weaken wildlife protections to benefit commercial special interests and trophy hunters.
- **Hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians opposed these appointments**, either by writing Governor Ferguson directly or through the dozens of state and national fish and wildlife advocacy groups that pleaded for commissioners who would prioritize wildlife protection.
- A 2023 [poll](#) revealed that **75% of Washington voters believe the governor should appoint conservationists and commissioners who will represent the interests of all Washingtonians**, while only 16% believe he should primarily appoint hunters and anglers who will protect hunting and fishing rights. Meanwhile, 67% say all Washingtonians should have an equal say in wildlife management, with only 25% indicating that hunters and anglers should have a greater say.

- For example, both Anderson and Linville are champions of **spring bear hunting, which 80% of Washingtonians oppose and only 8% support**. It is banned in all but eight states.
- With the re-appointment of Linville and Anderson and the appointment of Victor Garcia, six of the nine commissioners are now hunters and/or anglers. That means **that 67% of the Commission represents the 2.4% of Washingtonians who hunt and 8% who fish**.
- Nearly 70% of Washington voters believe wildlife has intrinsic value, and 90% care moderately or deeply about wildlife. These appointments **prioritize narrow hunting and commercial lobbies over Washington values and the interests of current and future Washingtonians**.

3. Show Disregard for the Safety and Welfare of State Employees

- In the wake of two tragic employee deaths, **the Washington Association of Fish and Wildlife Professionals, the largest union representing WDFW employees, wrote Governor Ferguson** to ask for the appointment of independent commissioners who would stand up for employees.
- Linville and Anderson have proven that they are unwilling to do so. Both refused to take any action after **two deaths and multiple other preventable workplace injuries and illnesses, which have resulted in 23 citations** for “serious” or “willful serious” safety violations by the state Department of Labor and Industries over the past two years.
- During her confirmation hearing, **Linville brushed off these safety concerns, saying that dangerous work is “really, really fun”** and categorizing it as a part of “paying your dues.” She indicated the Commission has no role in ensuring a safe workplace beyond approving budget requests by WDFW leadership, and confirmed that WDFW was aware of the dangers to its staff back in 2019 but failed to address them before the deaths in 2023 and 2024 (watch [here](#)).

4. Eliminate Dissent and Signal a Return to a Rubber-Stamp Commission

- Acting in concert with trophy hunting special interests like the Sportsmen’s Alliance, **Director Susewind has been working to stack the Commission with loyalists, pursuing a vindictive campaign** against independent commissioners who question his power and champion wildlife protection, science-based decision-making, and agency accountability.
- These appointments increase Commission dysfunction by returning it to a rubber-stamp body, choosing Linville and Anderson over commissioners who may sometimes disagree with WDFW management, and eliminating healthy disagreement, debate, and diversity of opinion.
- During their prior six-year terms, **Commissioners Linville and Anderson have never opposed a recommendation made by WDFW Director Kelly Susewind**.

5. Undermine Protection of Endangered Southern Resident Orcas and Wild Salmon

- More than 70 scientists, marine biologists, and orca advocates signed a letter to Governor Ferguson urging him to retain former Commissioner Dr. Tim Ragen, the former head of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission and an internationally recognized marine scientist, whom these experts said was essential to any hope of saving our critically endangered Southern Residents.
- However, the Governor dismissed Ragen and chose to reappoint Anderson and Linville, who have **consistently supported policies that hurt wild fish**. This includes supporting salmon hatchery policies that eliminate safeguards put in place to protect wild fish, reversing WDFW’s commitment to prioritizing the protection and recovery of wild salmon, **approving a native trout policy** that allows increased fishing for species even when WDFW has no information about population health, **increasing commercial fishing** on the Columbia River and restoring the use of non-selective commercial gill nets.