



May 24, 2019

Representative Gary Howell
Natural Resources and House Recreation Committee Chair
House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

RE: *Support for House Bill 4589 to Designate the Eastern Wild Turkey as Michigan's State Game Bird*

Dear Chairman Howell,

On behalf of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), we are writing to express our full support of HB 4589 to designate the Eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) as Michigan's official state game bird. States such as Alabama, Massachusetts, Oklahoma, and South Carolina have also chosen to designate the wild turkey as their state's game bird. The restoration of the wild turkey is perhaps known as North America's greatest wildlife conservation success story. These magnificent birds were nearly extirpated across all of Michigan and much of the U.S. in the early 1900's due to unregulated hunting and loss of habitat. However, through concerted efforts by state wildlife agencies, including the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, sportsmen and women, and organizations like the NWTF, we have restored the wild turkey across the U.S and populations now exceed 6.5 million wild turkeys!

Michigan currently has an estimated population of 200,000 eastern wild turkeys throughout the state and because of their resilience and robust population, spring turkey hunting is allowed to take place in every county across Michigan. Spring turkey hunting in Michigan attracts people from every state in the country and nearly every province in Canada and ranks 6th in the country in annual harvest. The display of an eastern wild turkey during the Spring months is something that resonates with all citizens of Michigan regardless of their pursuit. The resilience of the Eastern wild turkey and the commitment made by Michigan citizens, along with our natural resource agencies and conservation partners, makes it a perfect candidate for this designation for a state that cherishes its natural resources. We strongly encourage your support of this designation as Michigan's official state game bird and urge your committee to pass HB 4589.

Sincerely,

Art Pelon
State Chapter President
National Wild Turkey Federation

Rebecca Humphries
Chief Executive Officer
National Wild Turkey Federation

National Wild Turkey Federation

P.O. Box 530 • 770 Augusta Road • Edgefield, South Carolina 29824 • Phone: (803) 637-3106 • Fax: (803) 637-0034

www.nwtf.org