

1 A RESOLUTION commending the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, its
2 staff, and partners for the success of its elk restoration program.

3 WHEREAS, elk were historically prevalent in the forests and grasslands of
4 Kentucky and throughout eastern North America, serving important ecological functions
5 and providing people with food, fur, and other useful products; and

6 WHEREAS, elk were extirpated from Kentucky and most of their historic range due
7 to unregulated hunting and rapid habitat loss by the mid-1800s; and

8 WHEREAS, hunting and wildlife viewing in the Commonwealth annually involves
9 more than one million participants, contributes more than \$2.8 billion to Kentucky's
10 economy, and supports more than 42,000 jobs; and

11 WHEREAS, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources' mission is to
12 conserve, protect, and enhance fish and wildlife resources and to provide related
13 recreation opportunities in the Commonwealth; and

14 WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Commission strongly supported the Department
15 of Fish and Wildlife Resources' restoration of elk into Kentucky; and

16 WHEREAS, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the Fish and
17 Wildlife Commission partnered with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, coal
18 companies, local governments, and other states to build support for elk restoration; and

19 WHEREAS, 2022 marks the 25th anniversary of the reintroduction of elk into
20 Kentucky, which began in December of 1997; and

21 WHEREAS, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources translocated 1,541 elk
22 from six western states in the most extensive large mammal reintroduction in the history
23 of North America and perhaps the world; and

24 WHEREAS, the Kentucky elk herd has flourished in southeastern Kentucky
25 because of high-quality habitat, low predation, legal protection, and sustainable harvest
26 regulations; and

27 WHEREAS, Kentucky assisted Missouri, Virginia, and Wisconsin with their elk

1 restoration efforts by providing 322 elk over a 10-year period; and

2 WHEREAS, in January 2022, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources,
3 together with assistance from the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Daniel Boone
4 National Forest, landowners, and local governments, moved 50 elk to McCreary County
5 and released them on the public land of the Daniel Boone National Forest to more fully
6 distribute elk across the 16-county elk restoration zone; and

7 WHEREAS, Kentucky now sustains the largest elk herd and hunting program east
8 of the Rocky Mountains, providing abundant opportunities for hunting and viewing of elk
9 by Kentucky residents and visitors;

10 NOW, THEREFORE,

11 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of*
12 *Kentucky:*

13 ➔Section 1. The Senate hereby commends the Department of Fish and Wildlife
14 Resources, its staff, and partners for the success of its elk restoration program and the
15 positive ecological and economic impacts it has had across the elk restoration zone.

16 ➔Section 2. The Clerk of the Senate shall send a copy of this Resolution and
17 notification of its adoption to Rich Storm, Commissioner of the Department of Fish and
18 Wildlife Resources, 1 Sportsman's Lane, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601.