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January 25, 2016

The Honorable Tom Goodson
The Florida House of Representatives
218 House Office Building
402 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee FL 32399-1300

Re: HB 1153 Exemption/Hunting Licenses

Dear Representative Goodson:

We are writing to express our concerns regarding HB 1153, creating a public records exemption for personal information provided to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on applications for certain licenses. It is our position that the exemption, as currently drafted, is overly broad. We respectfully suggest the language be amended to narrow the exemption, or, alternatively, that HB 1153 be withdrawn from further consideration.

Of particular concern is the breadth of the proposed exemption, which proposes exempting, without limit, any type of information that relates to the identity of an applicant. Withholding all identifying information, however, would render it impossible to verify whether individuals are in fact qualified to safely hunt or operate a boat. The inability to access any identifying information runs contrary to public interest and undermines general public safety.

To better accomplish the stated purpose of this legislation, we have suggested several proposed amendments. (Please see attached document, Proposed Amendments to HB 1153). A narrower definition of personal information would both preserve the public interest at stake and fulfill the aim of the bill's statement of public necessity, which is to reduce the likelihood of identity theft.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns, Representative

Goodson. If we may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'B.A.P.', with a stylized flourish.

Barbara A. Petersen, President

Cc: The Honorable Steve Crisafulli, Speaker, Florida House of Representatives
Jon Kaney, General Counsel, First Amendment Foundation
Sam Morley, General Counsel, Florida Press Association