

## **Policy and practice for how BCN and the BCN ExComm should represent the coalition and its members**

**The presumption in forming the BCN coalition: Member groups wishing to be part of BCN support the coalition's objectives as expressed in BCN's bylaws. Coalition members elect officers who are charged with the responsibility to speak out on behalf of the coalition on issues and policies relating to birds and bird conservation, as expressed in Sections 3B & 3D of the BCN bylaws:**

Section 3. The objectives of BCN are:

- A. To promote public awareness, knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of birds, and other wildlife and wildlife habitat.
- B. To be a strong and influential voice in environmental affairs in the Chicago metropolitan region.
- C. To propose and support public and private programs, which seek to protect, restore, and enhance the natural environment, and the conservation of native bird populations.
- D. To inform the membership and the general public of specific threats to birds, and other wildlife and wildlife habitat, and to recommend appropriate action.
- E. To support the accumulation and maintenance of long-term records and other information on Illinois birds and their habitats, to be used as an aid to their perpetuation and as an indicator of environmental quality.
- F. To provide quality outdoor field experiences for members and the public.

**Goal of the proposed policy: Eliminate contention and divisiveness that occasionally arises when the ExComm 'speaks for' the entire coalition in: Meetings with other organizations, public bodies (forest preserve districts and the like). Public forums where public opinion is being sought. Sign-on letters.**

**Policy premise: On almost all occasions, having 'BCN' express support or opposition to an action or policy, speaking for all its member groups, is not controversial. Examples might be, supporting increased spending for bird conservation, opposing feral cat colonies, etc. In such instances, it's probably true that all coalition member groups would readily concur in the position being expressed, and fully support their group being invoked as a supporter of the position. Sign on letters are the most obvious situation where general support can usually be assumed.**

**Dealing with the exceptions: The most recent example of an exception might be wind energy and turbines vs. birds. One or more groups within the coalition may be opposed to categorical support for wind turbine power generation. In this case, the 'devil is in the details'. ExComm members are then charged with the responsibility to strategize with the group or groups uncomfortable with those details, and make sure those concerns are fully expressed in any public or private policy statement emanating from BCN.**

**Should one or more member groups within the coalition be totally opposed to a specific policy statement/position, then the officers should poll all members to make sure a general consensus exists, supporting that policy or position. Group(s) in opposition should be noted when the policy statement is made, i.e., BCN supports (opposes) position X, but note that our member group Y does not agree with the consensus.**

**In a time sensitive situation (BCN needs to respond with the coalition's position or belief on very short notice), coalition members necessarily delegate their 'vote' to the elected BCN officers who may be speaking or writing on behalf of the coalition. These time sensitive situations usually do not allow a member group to go back to their own board or members for approval.**