

Idaho Fish and Game Commission chief opts out

Eric Barker/Lewiston Tribune

Idaho Fish and Game Commission Chairman Will Naillon said Tuesday he will not reapply for his position after being nudged out by Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter following an ongoing clash with a handful of legislators.

Naillon, of Challis, and Commissioner Mark Doerr of Twin Falls were informed earlier this month by an aide to Otter that the governor would not reappoint them to second four-year terms. Otter spokesman Jon Hanian later insisted the two commissioners were welcome to reapply for their jobs.

"I believe that if the governor wanted me on the commission, he would have simply reappointed me," Naillon said in a statement. "The governor is not bound by any procedure on the appointment of fish and game commissioners and could simply appoint myself or anyone else at his discretion. I feel that reapplying would be somewhat redundant, as my voice for wildlife and representation of the sportsmen of Idaho has been well-documented over the last four years."

Otter's decision to not automatically reappoint Naillon and Doerr was widely seen as political retribution for the commission's refusal to make it easier for wealthy hunters to win coveted big game tags and for refusing to allow large landowners to sell hunting tags.

Naillon, an environmental specialist for Hecla Mining Co., also said Otter did not ask him to reapply for his position. He has had no contact with the governor's office since being informed he would not be automatically reappointed.

Both Naillon and Doerr were invited to serve on a committee to select candidates to fill their positions. Naillon said he plans to do so.

Doerr could not be reached for comment Tuesday, and he has not announced if he plans to reapply.

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