

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

INTRODUCED BY WAGMAN, ANDERSEN, BARRETT, BRUEGGEMAN, P. CLARK, FISHER, FUCHS,
HAINES, HAWK, HURWITZ, JACKSON, LAKE, LAMBERT, LANGE, LAWSON, LEHMAN, LEWIS,
MAEDJE, MENDENHALL, PATTISON, RICE, RIPLEY, ROBERTS, ROME, ROSS, SALES, SCHRUMPF,
SINRUD, STEINBEISSER, STOKER, B. THOMAS

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
MONTANA URGING THE U.S. SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE AND THE U.S. SECRETARY OF THE
INTERIOR TO DIRECT THE APPROPRIATE FEDERAL AGENCIES TO EXPEDITE THE ELIMINATION OF
BRUCELLOSIS IN THE YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK BISON AND ELK HERDS.

WHEREAS, an essential element of proper wildlife management is the maintenance of healthy animal
populations; and

WHEREAS, the disease brucellosis (*Brucella abortus*) has been known to be present in the Yellowstone
National Park bison herd for 86 years; and

WHEREAS, the bison population of Yellowstone National Park is now in excess of 4,000 bison; and

WHEREAS, in the 1999-2000 final environmental impact statement of the interagency bison
management plan for the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park, one of the objectives was to commit
to the eventual elimination of brucellosis in bison and other wildlife; and

WHEREAS, the State of Montana, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of the
Interior agreed in a 1995 memorandum of understanding that an objective was to plan for the elimination of
brucellosis from the greater Yellowstone area by the year 2010; and

WHEREAS, a cattle herd in Idaho has been infected with brucellosis by elk from Yellowstone National
Park; and

WHEREAS, Yellowstone National Park bison that have been infected with or exposed to brucellosis and
elk that may have been infected with or exposed to brucellosis frequently make nomadic or migratory
movements into Montana, threatening the health of Montana citizens as well as the state's livestock industry and
brucellosis class-free status; and

WHEREAS, for years, Montana has been forced to react to the nomadic movements of bison from
Yellowstone National Park into Montana with drastic and costly measures, including hazing, capturing, and

1 lethally removing bison, to protect the health and welfare of Montana citizens and the livestock industry; and
2 WHEREAS, elimination of brucellosis in the Yellowstone National Park bison and elk herds would
3 mitigate a public health and livestock concern and reduce ongoing state expenses related to the nomadic
4 movement of bison from Yellowstone National Park; and

5 WHEREAS, although an effective brucellosis vaccine exists for domestic cattle, a similar vaccine or
6 vaccines should be developed, tested, and implemented in the Yellowstone National Park wild bison and elk
7 herds as soon as possible; and

8 WHEREAS, alternative brucellosis elimination strategies, in addition to or preceding brucellosis
9 vaccination, such as but not limited to habitat improvement and population management within Yellowstone
10 National Park, should also be expeditiously implemented if shown to facilitate or to be effective for eliminating
11 brucellosis in bison or elk.

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13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
14 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

15 That the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and the U.S. Secretary of the Interior be urged to direct the U.S.
16 Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services Office, the National
17 Park Service, and any other affected federal agencies to undertake the expeditious elimination of brucellosis
18 in the Yellowstone National Park bison and elk herds by developing and implementing a brucellosis elimination
19 program.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent by the Secretary of State to the
21 members of the Montana Congressional Delegation, the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of
22 Agriculture, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and the Director of the National Park Service.

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