

Senate Bill 47
March 8, 2005
Presented by Larry Peterman
House Agriculture Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Larry Peterman, Chief of Field Operations for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

We would like to provide informational testimony to this bill and acknowledge that we have no objection to this proposal. FWP continues to support the concept of a private citizen being able to kill a lion or wolf if it is attacking, killing, or threatening to kill livestock or domestic "pets." Mountain lions are currently managed as a game species by the state of Montana and they present no jurisdictional issues relative to state or federal authorities.

However, it is important to point out that as long as wolves remain listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act, federal regulation's super-cede state regulations. Currently, wolves are listed as endangered in northwest Montana and experimental across the southern half of Montana. Federal regulations now provide the authority for a landowner in areas south of the Missouri River or I-90 to legally kill a wolf on their private land if it is threatening or attacking their livestock or guarding animals, or domestic dogs. The same authorization applies to permittees on federal land with an active grazing or outfitting permit to protect livestock or guarding/herding animals. This is not the case in northwest Montana where wolves are endangered.

We are actively supporting the delisting of wolves in Montana and are collectively working towards that goal. However, until such time that wolves are formally delisted, federal regulations will take precedence.