EXHIBIT 3
DATE 3/10/05
SB 353

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Comments Submitted in opposition to SB 353
House Agriculture Committee Hearing 3/10/05

In 1881 General Phil Sheridan wrote in a letter to his Commanding Officer, "If I could learn that every buffalo in the Northern herd were killed I would be glad. The destruction of this herd would do more to keep the Indians quiet than anything else that could happen."

124 years later the destruction of this herd, America's last wild herd, continues. If SB 353 passes, the surgical neutering of buffalo will join quarantine, vaccination, vaginal telemetry, a so-called hunt, hazing, harassment, capture, and slaughter as another tool in the modern-day destruction of the buffalo.

Like the 19th century slaughter, this bill will be used as an attempt to silence the very people whose cultures evolved on this land with the great herds of buffalo.

In an effort to quell the disquiet surrounding the present mistreatment of buffalo, SB 353 seeks to reconnect buffalo with the tribes.

In effect, this Bill is saying, "we will give you your buffalo back and we'll give you a choice: dead or infertile. Whatever its intentions, this bill is an affront to anyone concerned with our last wild buffalo. Please do not pass it.

In addition to the abovementioned concerns, I want to call attention to some technical issues. First, with the bill's title: "Transfer neutered wild buffalo to tribal organizations." Just as you can't start herds with neutered bison, there's no such thing as "neutered wild buffalo." By definition, buffalo that have been captured, anesthitized, operated upon, and rendered infertile, can no longer be considered wild.

Like the rest of this bill, the fiscal note is faulty. It completely omits the costs associated with the holding, testing, and operating facilities that ~~the~~ state and federal regulations require. The existing facilities, as MT State Vet Tom Linfield testified during the Senate committee hearing on this bill,

are inadequate for the requisite holding and operational facilities. Lands will have to be bought or leased and facilities constructed. Yet these costs are not found in the fiscal note. Also absent are the costs of the necessary Biological opinions the agencies would need to write before such facilities could be constructed in the wildlife rich Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Please pay close attention to technical note number one, "if federal funding is no longer available, the general fund would have to bear the cost to continue the program."

Because this bill falls outside the scope of the IBMP, it is unlikely that federal funds will cover the unnecessary costs of this bill.

Thank you Chairman Butcher and members of the committee for your time.