EXHIBIT 7
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HB 81

House Bill 81
January 13, 2005
Presented by Jeff Hagener
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jeff Hagener, Director of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

I am here to ask your support in passage of House Bill 81, an act making permanent 87-2-520 MCA, a statute authorizing the Department to issue supplemental game damage licenses to hunters to address game damage problems or for game management purposes.

This statute was enacted in 2001, with temporary sunset provisions attached. The purpose of creating game damage supplemental licenses was to provide another tool for the Department to use in game damage situations where the use of existing tools such as special game damage seasons or landowner kill permits might not be as effective.

Supplemental game damage licenses are valid only for antlerless animals, and valid for use only on land eligible for game damage assistance where a landowner allows public hunting for the type of game animal causing the damage. A landowner may designate some or all of the resident hunters receiving the licenses, depending upon whether or not the hunting district offers limited or unlimited special permits during the general season, and a landowner may not charge a fee to hunters using the permit.

Since being enacted, the Department has issued game damage supplemental licenses in several instances where elk were causing damage to haystacks in central and western Montana. Supplemental game damage licenses have proven effective when small numbers of animals need to be harvested and prompt action is required to prevent further damage by issuing permits to local hunters who can respond quickly.

Based upon this knowledge, the Department supports passage of HB 81 which would allow the Department to continue to issue supplemental game damage licenses when appropriate.