House Bill 82
January 13, 2005
Presented by Jeff Hagener
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 1.13.05
HB 82

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

I am here to request your support in passage of House Bill 82, an act making permanent 87-1-513 MCA, a statute authorizing the Department to issue an either-sex or antlerless elk permit at no cost to a landowner who provides public elk hunting free of charge under the terms of a contractual public elk hunting access agreement negotiated between the landowner and the Department.

This statute was enacted with temporary sunset provisions by the Legislature in 1999. The basic intent of this proposal was to address concerns of landowners who were asked to provide public elk hunting access, but who were unable to obtain elk permits for their own use on their own lands due to a limited number of permits being issued through random drawings.

In some hunting districts, elk populations exceed management objectives, and while sufficient numbers of antlerless elk permits to manage elk numbers are being issued to hunters, those licensed cow elk hunters, and a much smaller number of licensed either-sex elk hunters, are often not allowed access to areas holding elk because the landowner is unable to draw an elk permit for his or her own use.

Although the Department has only been able to successfully utilize this opportunity with one, and the same, landowner in each of the past four hunting seasons, we feel there may be more such opportunities identified in future years, and on that basis, we support passage of this bill.