

EXHIBIT 13
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HB 337

House Bill 337
February 1, 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 Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

The intent of HB 337 is to provide an opportunity for qualified students within our university system to become a FWP game warden. The warden trainee program provides part-time work for selected college seniors to participate in learning warden duties in an on-the-job environment. After completion of their senior year, the students are then eligible to work full time in a probationary status. Many young Montanans have a dream to become a Montana game warden. Without the trainee program, our university students cannot compete against more experienced law enforcement applicants in a nation-wide hiring process.

This bill is not a new proposal. Until recently, FWP had a warden trainee program in existence for over 30 years. The program has proven to be effective, and over one-third of FWP's wardens graduated via this program. It is important in FWP's warden recruitment to hire people that understand the culture of our state. Wildlife law enforcement is a challenging task. The funding provided in the bill will provide employment for two half-time students from our state's university system. This program helps keep our university students in Montana and we ask you to support our efforts and this bill.