EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2·8·05
HB 214

House Bill 214
February 8, 2005
Presented by Jeff Hagener
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

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

The Department has a longstanding tradition of supporting the Montana's hunting heritage, and over the years has implemented a number of special programs to encourage young people to participate in hunting activities. HB 214 will continue that process.

Currently the Department issues approximately 4,200 Resident Youth Combination Sports Licenses annually. The fee for this license is one half of the fee charged for the Resident Combination Sports License. Passage of HB 248 during the 2003 Legislature provided an opportunity for first time resident youths who are 12 years of age or older – and less than 18 years of age – when applying for a hunting license to receive a youth combination sports license free of charge. In the first year after the legislation passed FWP issued approximately 4,000 of the free Youth Combination Sports Licenses. The Department believes it is appropriate to extend a discounted opportunity to non-resident youths as well.

House Bill 214 would authorize the sale of up to 500 Class B-13 Nonresident Youth Big Game Combination Licenses at one half of the cost of a regularly priced Class B10 nonresident big game combination license. The Class B-13 licenses are not included in the limit on the number of available Class B-10 nonresident big game combination licenses issued pursuant to 87-2-505. The bill also provides that youths holding a Class B-13 license must be accompanied by an adult who is an immediate family member and who holds a valid nonresident Class B-10 or Class B-11 combination license, or holds a valid Montana resident deer or elk tag.

Issuance of these licenses will be on a first come first served basis. Due to the timing of license sales, Montana residents with out-of-state youth relatives will have a 6 week head start on non-residents who draw B-10 or B-11 license or obtain an outfitter or landowner-sponsored license.

FWP believes that passage of HB 214 will encourage more young hunters to become involved in big game hunting, and will provide improved opportunities for nonresident youth to enjoy hunting in Montana.

We would appreciate your support for HB 214. Thank you.