

EXHIBIT 27  
DATE 2/10/05  
HB 477

House Bill 477  
February, 10, 2005  
Presented by Chris Smith  
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am am Chris Smith, Chief of Staff for Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

The sacrifice by the men and women of Montana's National Guard, Federal Reserve and active duty military personnel during times of war or other contingency operation is something we all should recognize and be proud of. During this session there have been several bills designed to recognize our service men and women for their commitment, dedication and sacrifice. HB 477 is one of them.

House Bill 477 proposes that an applicant who is a member of the armed forces and who forfeits a moose, mountain goat or limited mountain sheep license as a result of certain deployments, is guaranteed the same license the first year it is available upon their return to Montana.

Under current A.R.M. rules (12.3 .134, 12.3 .135) and statutes, FWP allows refunds and restoring bonus points on a case-by-case basis for specific military circumstances. FWP has provided 100% refunds, reinstatement of bonus points and waved the seven-year wait requirement for military personnel who drew permits, but were deployed before the start of the season. We reissued the refunded licenses to the next person drawn in that district. In effect, this makes it as if the person was never drawn.

HB 477 would give the FWP Commission authority to adopt rules to give our military personnel another option. Rather than "re-setting" the clock, HB 477 would guarantee the service member the same special license in the first year the license is available upon their return.

The fiscal impacts of this bill are minimal as any refunded licenses could be reissued. If HB 477 is passed and approved, FWP can administer it with no major impacts.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and committee members.