



SENATE AGRICULTURE

EXHIBIT NO. 3

DATE 3/8/05

BILL NO. 3HJ22

Testimony in Opposition to HJR 22
Amy McNamara, National Park Director
Greater Yellowstone Coalition

March 7, 2005

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC) respectfully urges you to oppose House Joint Resolution 22, a joint resolution on bison management calling for the United States Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to be placed in charge of brucellosis elimination in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

GYC shares your concern for maintaining Montana's brucellosis class-free status and for finding better solutions for disease management throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area. That being said, House Joint Resolution is a step backward, not forward and we urge you not to support it.

Five years ago the Interagency Bison Management Plan was signed by three federal agencies (US Forest Service, APHIS, and the Department of Interior) and two state agencies (Department of Livestock and Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks) to manage the risk of brucellosis in the northern part of the Greater Yellowstone Area. Since 2000, these agencies have been working cooperatively to manage the Yellowstone bison herd and protect Montana's class-free status. Since this plan was put in place, there has been no transmission of brucellosis to Montana cattle, indicating that the plan has been successful in its goal to manage the risk of transmission of brucellosis between wildlife and livestock.

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Given that the IBMP has successfully maintained Montana's brucellosis class-free status, we argue that there is no need to put control of management into the hands of one agency when the five agencies have been able to cooperate successfully together. More importantly, the five agencies bring different skills to the management approach and bring different authorities over the land they manage. Several of the agencies have specific expertise in wildlife management. APHIS does not have expertise in wildlife management, leaving them severely lacking as sole administrator of a wildlife disease program.

Finally, the resolution calls for "elimination" of brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area. In 2000 when the IBMP was finalized, it was defined as a risk management plan because all signatories recognized that it was not possible to eradicate brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area. No tools or strategies have since been developed that change the nature of the

program. Given such, there is no basis for changing the goals of the program from risk management to eradication. Also there is no need to vacate the IBMP through such a resolution.

Thank you for considering the comments of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 406-586-1593.

Respectfully submitted,

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National Parks Program Director
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