

Senate Bill 47
January 11, 2005
Presented by Jeff Hagener
Senate Fish and Game Committee

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

We would like to provide informational testimony to this bill and acknowledge that we have no objection to this proposal. FWP continues to support the concept of a private citizen being able to kill a lion or wolf if it is attacking, killing, or threatening to kill livestock or domestic "pets." Mountain lions are currently managed as a game species by the state of Montana and they present no jurisdictional issues relative to state or federal authorities.

However, it is important to point out that as long as wolves remain listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act, federal regulation's super-cede state regulations. Currently, wolves are listed as threatened in northwest Montana and experimental across the southern half of Montana. Federal regulations now provide the authority for a landowner to legally kill a wolf on their private land if it is attacking their livestock or guarding animals, or domestic dogs throughout Montana. This is not the case on public lands in northwest Montana without prior written authorization . In southern Montana, federal rules currently allow a landowner to legally kill a wolf if it is attacking livestock, livestock herding or guardian animals, or domestic dogs on private property. Beginning February 7, 2005, landowners on their private property will be able to legally kill a wolf if it is chasing, molesting, or harassing their livestock. The same authorization will also apply to permittees on federal land with an active grazing or outfitting permit.

We are actively supporting the delisting of wolves in Montana and are collectively working towards that goal. However, until such time that wolves are formally delisted, federal regulations will take precedence.