

House Bill 260  
March 24, 2005  
Presented by Chris Smith  
Senate Fish and Game Committee

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

House Bill 260 has been substantially altered since its original form. HB 260 now directs FWP to establish an account and mechanism for people to donate private funds, including refunds of wildlife license fees to be used for acquisition of water-based recreational and fishing access sites.

Fishing Access Site acquisition is currently funded with \$.50 on Resident and \$2.50 on Nonresident Fishing Licenses. When this level of funding was first enacted in 1973, it generated enough spending power to acquire 4 or 5 new access sites annually. With today's increased land costs combined with increased demands for recreational lands such as for second home sites the purchasing power of these earmarks funds has been substantially decreased.

The funding created in HB 260 will help FWP secure additional water access sites for Montana recreators. We urge your favorable consideration of HB 260.