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EXHIBIT 20
DATE 1-29-09
HB 253

Yellowstone Bison Herd
Protect, Respect, Honor

January 29, 2009

My name is Julia Vincent. I reside and work in the Helena area. I am the granddaughter of Montana homesteaders. My father's parents had a homestead along the North Fork of the Flathead River. My mother's family homesteaded in Daniels county. I was raised to revere and appreciate the land and her native inhabitants.

I am asking you to please support HB253.

The Yellowstone Bison Herd is the last remnant of the 35 million bison that once enjoyed freedom—freedom to roam, freedom to graze, freedom from abuse and slaughter by the Department of Livestock. Due to the relentless attempts by the DOL to exterminate the buffalo, they are now ecologically extinct. The Yellowstone Bison are the only true bison remaining in the U.S. All other herds are descendants of forced crossbreeding of cattle with bison. The Yellowstone Bison are indigenous wildlife, *not livestock!* The abuse and slaughter of these animals by the DOL is a reprehensible misuse of taxpayers' money. For the State of Montana to continue with the displacement and elimination of the indigenous inhabitants of the land, as has been done since the 1800's—this time at taxpayers' expense—violates public trust.

During the hazing operations, calves have been trampled to death, the herd has been chased onto ice where their members fell through and drowned. In the winter, when bison have left Yellowstone National Park in search of food, the DOL has forced them back into the park, where there is no food and they have starved. Some have died in cramped capture pens the DOL has forced them into. Again, all of this at taxpayers' expense. The DOL's justification for their actions? Brucellosis. Brucellosis is a disease that was brought to North America by imported livestock. Cattle are not indigenous to North America. They brought the disease with them. There has never been even one documented case of cattle contracting brucellosis from bison. Yet that is the lie and the excuse that taxpayers' money is spent on to abuse and slaughter indigenous wildlife. The DOL is working to protect the economic and political power of a few individuals in private industry. Again, back to the 1800's and with it, the beginnings of the range wars. So, why are the cowboys at the DOL being paid by Montana's taxpayers to "manage" native wildlife? Does this oligarchy of the cattle industry benefit Montana's economy? Montana's wages rank fiftieth in the nation. The cost of living here does not.

Because of the inhumane treatment of the Yellowstone Bison by the DOL, I quit purchasing beef a few years ago. I will not support an industry that allows acts of animal cruelty for which there has been no accountability.

To say the DOL is guilty of mismanagement of wildlife would be a euphemism. They have abused their power and misused taxpayers' funds. They need to be removed from wildlife management.

HB253 fails to address the need for year-round habitat for the bison. I ask that you would please amend it so that this is included in the bill. The Horse Butte Peninsula, a cattle-free area, would serve this need well. Public support for the bison and the absence of cattle should make this a conflict-free area.

This bill addresses the concerns of private property owners, both those who welcome the bison on their land and those who do not. It is a good thing to address the concerns of the citizens.

I close with following quote:

"In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals, for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beast, and that from them, and from the stars and the sun and moon should man learn.." ~ Eagle Chief (Letakos-Lesa), Pawnee

Julia Vincent

April 4, 2008

Mi-ta-ku-ye (my relatives),

I have been called upon to perform the Spirit Releasing ceremony for the thousands of buffalo that have lost their lives in the last decade, in the mountains of the Yellowstone River country.

Many, many generations ago, our relatives, the Pte O-ya-te (Buffalo People) came up from Wind Cave in the Black Hills; the heart of Un-ci Ma-ka (Grandmother Earth) and prepared the way for our existence. From that time forward, they gave of themselves for our survival, as long as we respected their gift. They taught us how to live in an honorable and respectful way by example and through the teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman. She brought the Sacred Canupa (Pipe) to remind us of our responsibilities and also provided us with the knowledge of the sacred rites that are necessary to discipline ourselves.

From the Buffalo Nation, our ancestors learned to have an honorable relationship of being connected with Un-ci Ma-ka; this "way of life" that identifies us of who we are as an O-ya-te (a People), with all it's sacred teachings. They understood the gifts from Un-ci and carefully lived in harmony with her wellbeing. For that reason, we hold them to be sacred. We co-existed in a good way until we were nearly destroyed. *Ob un-ka-so-ta-pi tka*. The sacred Buffalo Nation in these mountains are the survivors of that natural way of life. We are culturally and spiritually indebted to them and we still need their guidance, to remind us how to be at peace and harmony with Un-ci Ma-ka.

Let it be known that Yellowstone territory; the habitat of the last wild Buffalo Nation - is sacred ground, it has been a SACRED SITE for the First Nation's people, and for all humanity who hold deep respect for all Creation. The Buffalo Nation has confirmed this fact; by where they have ended up, continuing to survive in their natural migration, struggling to live in a peaceful manner. Our ancestors also gave us this message by fasting in this area long ago, as they recognized this place of sacredness. This understanding is how we maintain the balance upon Un-ci Ma-ka, to protect these places, especially for the survival of our future generations to come.

These Buffalo that lost their lives in Yellowstone did not die by Natural Law, nor were their spirits honored with ceremony. This is why we must go there to perform a ceremony of honor for those that lost their lives by the misunderstanding of human-kind and pray to Wakan Tankan (Great Spirit) for pity of how gifts were unappreciated. We must pray with all those who grieve and be grateful for them.

Many of the people who are deeply concerned of what has happened in the manner of which their lives were taken; we see this as an unnecessary massacre. We have known that this particular herd is the last original Buffalo Nation that still follows their migration pattern, the little that is left in tact; they are the sign of our connection to our wellbeing of living in harmony. I humbly ask for all People to make prayers on April 15th, at high noon; for a healing of humanity - for the decisions that are being made with no regard for the sacredness of life, for the massacred Buffalo's spiritual journey and to protect what is left - in understanding of what our journey in this life represents in being responsible! We must pray for the healing of the human Spirit, to understand the connection to all living beings on Un-ci Ma-ka.

In a Sacred Hoop of Life, where there is no ending and no beginning!

Can-te Mi-ta-wa I-ta-han (from my heart)

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chief Arvol Looking Horse". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Chief Arvol Looking Horse

19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe