EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2/5/09
HB 74

House Bill 74
Thursday, February 5, 2009
Presented by Chris Smith
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

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

HB 74 would expand the number of wildlife species that the FWP Commission may prescribe an archery-only season for under 87-1-304 MCA.

Bowhunter interest for a mountain lion archery-only season was heard during the 2008-2009 biennial season setting process. At that time, no specific concern was identified except for existing statute omitting mountain lion, bear and wolf from the FWP Commission's authority to prescribe such a season. Adjusting authority for the FWP Commission to add species to archery-only seasons will likely result in little additional harvest or license sales, and would be consistent with existing mountain lion management and archery-only seasons for other species.

This bill does not authorize or obligate any specific archery-only season for bears, wolves, or mountain lions, but simply provides the FWP Commission with the authority to set such a season. The FWP Commission would still need to approve any specific archery-only season structure, which would involve public review and comment.

FWP believes this bill will simply increase the management flexibility of the FWP Commission to set specific seasons, and potentially increase opportunity for Montana hunters.