

Montana Wildlife Federation Testimony on HB 471

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,

My name is Ben Lamb, and I am the conservation director for State and National Issues for the Montana Wildlife Federation. MWF is Montana's oldest and largest hunter/angler conservation organization with over 7,500 members, and 23 affiliated Rod and Gun clubs across the state.

Today, we stand in opposition to HB 471.

There is no doubt that wolves are recovered, and are creating unacceptable impacts to livestock producers and big game herds across the state, and the Rockies. However, this bill unfortunately falls short of the desired outcome of reducing wolf populations.

By mandating 15 breeding pair as the maximum number of wolves allowable in the state, we set the stage for constant review and the heavy hand of the federal government in wildlife management issues. Maintaining the minimum number of wolves allowable under the ESA really means that we will never have a delisted population of wolves; we will never have a wolf hunt; and our livestock producers will never be free of the shackles of the ESA when wolves are at their front door.

The state of Montana, in 2003, drafted a management plan using the expertise and guidance of Montanan's from all walks of life. Livestock producers, hunters, business owners, legislators and conservationists drafted a plan that has been shown to work, when allowed to.

We ask that you honor the plan that Montanan's arrived at through consensus, and vote no on this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment,

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