EXHIBIT 1
DATE 3-9-2011
HB 475

House Bill 475
March 9, 2011
Presented by Dave Risley
House Appropriations Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Dave Risley, Administrator of the Fish and Wildlife Division, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here in strong support of House Bill 475.

HB475 would establish a mandatory trapper safety and education course intended to promote safe and responsible trapping activities. Regulated trapping is a valuable management tool and provides multiple benefits to wildlife and people across this state. Trapping is managed through scientifically-based regulations that do not endanger wildlife populations and information collected from trappers is important in managing furbearer populations in a sustainable fashion. Increased public scrutiny of trapping requires that members of the public who do trap do so in a responsible, ethical and well-informed manner. Establishment of a trapper safety and education course similar to what is currently in place for both hunter and bowhunter education will help to provide this important foundation. It should be noted that the requirement to complete the course before purchasing a resident trapping license applies only to new trappers. Those who have previously purchased a resident trapping license or have completed a Department approved trapper safety and education course are not required to complete this program.

If this legislation is enacted, FWP will cooperate with nonprofit trapping associations to implement a curriculum and manual relevant to Montana and will work with those same organizations to develop criteria for recruiting competent instructors to deliver the course. At a meeting of interested stakeholders last fall that included livestock organizations, trapper organizations and sportsmen, there was a consensus on the need for implementing this safety and education program.

We urge your support of HB475.