EXHIBIT 6
DATE 1/13/2011
HB 151

House Bill 151
January 13, 2011
Presented by Dave Risley
House Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Dave Risley, Fish and Wildlife Division Administrator of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide information on House Bill 151.

HB151 would impose a 7-year wait on anyone who successfully draws an either-sex elk permit in the Elkhorns (HD 380), would eliminate the landowner preference permit in the Elkhorns, and would require at least 125 either-sex permits be issued each year.

The elimination of landowner preference in the Elkhorn Mountains of HD 380 hits at a sensitive component of the current relationship between the sporting community, FWP and landowners. Landowner preference has been and is seen by some as due recognition of landowners for their contribution of habitat as well as tolerance for wildlife and hunters alike. The most recent proposals submitted to the FWP Commission on this topic have proposed a wait period for any individual, but any land parcel eligible for preference remains available for a landowner designee. Even that has prompted concern among those who support landowner recognition in this manner. This said, other advocacies have challenged landowner preference as it is currently defined/applied.

FWP experience with elk waiting periods includes a mixed public advocacy, and comes to the agency via several different season proposals during recent season-setting processes. A seven-year wait in the Elkhorn Mountains (HD 380) would improve drawing odds from 1.5% to 1.7% if current participation remains constant unless the perception or realization of those improved odds generates greater applicant interest that could potentially confound or reverse any improved odds.

This proposal's perpetual setting of either-sex elk permits at 125 is best evaluated in light of the elk season history in the Elkhorn Mountain of HD 380. In the 24 years since 1987, the permits have annually ranged from 50 to 125. The average number of permits across that time has been 89 permits—only once in 2002 were permits set at 125 (a low of 45 permits was set in 1993). Permit numbers have been available for annual change based upon formal elk surveys during winter surveillance flights. These changes are guided not only by annual elk survey efforts but also by elk plan objectives that include a minimum of 10% antlered bulls in the observed post season population with an average age of harvested bulls between 5-1/2 and 6-1/2 years of age. Yearling bull (spike) harvest has been regulated by a restriction on yearling bulls that prevents any spike with a branch off the main antler beam at least four inches long. This restriction, coupled with habitat security, allows the Elkhorn season type to entertain limited permits for older (trophy) bulls, limited antlerless B licenses primarily for population control and general license opportunity for yearling bulls. In this, the prescription allows older aged bulls to develop while still allowing coveted annual opportunity for those unsuccessful in the drawing. Unforeseen circumstances such as weather, fire, or wolves could render a minimum permit level of 125 unsustainable, and couldn't be adjusted without change of statute.

Elkhorn Permit History:

Year	# Permits	Harvest	Success
1987	50	13	29
1988	50	29	59
1989	75	25	42
1990	75	33	49
1991	75	50	79
1992	75	48	74
1993	45	26	66
1994	60	33	68
1995	60	23	43
1996	100		
1997	75		
1998	100		
1999	100	47	47
2000	100	76	77
2001	100	43	47
2002	125	69	56
2003	100	69	71
2004	110	69	63
2005	110	71	65
2006	110	75	68
2007	110	79	72
2008	110	57	51
2009	110	69	63
2010	110		