

EXHIBIT 9  
DATE 1/13/2011  
HB 144

**Testimony in favor of HB 144:**

I am Mary Ellen Schnur, chairman of Montana Outfitters and Guides Association Fish and Game Committee. I reside at Townsend, Montana. I cannot appear in person at this hearing today, due to having to attend the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association in Billings.

Montana Outfitters and Guides Association supports HB 144. This bill, relating to the hunting of large predators, is necessary to maintain stable sustainable populations of predators, notably wolves and mountain lions; and prey, mostly elk, deer and antelope. If these wildlife populations are balanced and sustainable, domestic animals will also have a better chance of survival.

Presently, in northwestern Montana's Region 1 and west central Montana's Region 2, mountain lions are hunted by limited entry permit. Hunter harvest is low. More mountain lions are taken by FWP and ADC than are taken by hunters. The lions taken by state and federal agencies are removed because of predation to pets and livestock, and threats to human safety. Hunters could take a good number of those animals, under the provisions of HB 144. Hunters taking animals produces revenue to Fish Wildlife and Parks; agencies taking animals costs money to the respective agencies. A science-based quota ensures that lions are not over-harvested.

The wolf season last year operated on a quota system. Thousands of hunters purchased wolf licenses; the quota of some 70 wolves was met within one. We have a successful track record with wolf hunting by quota; we should keep the quota system.

*Mary Ellen Schnur*