



COUNTY OF

POWELL

EXHIBIT 15  
DATE 3/17/2011  
SB 174

409 Missouri Avenue  
Deer Lodge, MT 59722  
406-846-3680

March 17, 2011

Chairman Washburn and Members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Cele Pohle and I am a Powell County Commissioner.

We support Senate Bill 174. We would like to thank Senator Vuckovich for carrying this bill.

The Spotted Dog Wild Life Management Area was purchased with Natural Resource Damages Funds. The purpose of the fast tracked acquisition, we thought, was to permanently protect fish and wildlife resources, enhance winter habitat for elk, mule deer, and antelope and to promote public recreational access to previously private inaccessible lands.

No mention of buffalo/wild bison were mentioned in any of the documents that I read. I believe that I would have remembered and questioned the advisability of that action in a cattle producing county.

I have included a copy of a 1957 certification that Powell County was brucellosis free. The certificate has been displayed in the commissioners' office. This speaks to the importance that the previous and current commissioners place on a brucellosis free county and state.

Our county had sheep producers; however, with the introduction of the wolf, we see few flocks of sheep. I would hate to say in the future that Powell County used to be a cattle producing county but with the introduction of the wild bison we see diminished herds.

I have also included testimony that I gave on Jan 13 to the FWP Commission for your review.

Again, I would like to thank Senator Vuckovich for carrying this non-partisan bill. The wild bison that will leave the Spotted Dog WMA to forage for food at the private landowner's haystacks really don't care if it's a Republican or Democrat's haystack.

Powell County Commissioners respectfully request a Do Pass on Senate Bill 174

# The State of Montana

## MODIFIED-CERTIFIED BRUCELLOSIS-FREE AREA

Montana Livestock Sanitary Board  
and  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Animal Disease Eradication Branch  
Cooperating

This is to Certify that POWELL County in the  
State of Montana, having met the necessary requirements, is hereby declared  
a Modified-Certified Brucellosis-Free Area by the Montana Livestock Sani-  
tary Board and the Animal Disease Eradication Branch of the U. S. De-  
partment of Agriculture for a period of 3 years from March 1957.



  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
MONTANA LIVESTOCK SANITARY BOARD

  
VETERINARIAN IN CHARGE,  
ANIMAL DISEASE ERADICATION BRANCH



409 Missouri Avenue  
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January 13, 2011

Chairman Ream and Commissioners,

My name is Cele Pohle, Powell County Commissioner.

Our entire county was very surprised on January 9 when the Director announced that the Spotted Dog WMA and The Bob Marshall Wilderness Area were on his list for the translocation of bison to be able to roam freely. Both of these areas adjoin cattle producers and are, of course, in our County.

When the Spotted Dog Unit emerged on the fast track for acquisition with the Natural Resources Damage funds, we were very apprehensive in giving our support to the project. However, in the best interests of the State of Montana residents, we agreed to give our support. Our conditions were to be kept informed, to make sure that a good neighbor policy was established, and that a true advisory board be activated.

When the Spotted Dog was purchased the Director certainly didn't share his vision that the property was the perfect landscape to start the relocation of FWP bison. If he had mentioned this in a public meeting or in any of the documents that were produced, our support of the acquisition certainly would not have happened. A letter of dissent would have been produced by the Commissioners.

We take offense at the comments of the Director on January 7, when he stated that "people will just have to be darn careful on how they recreate there if we put bison on there." The draft Environmental Assessment document dated June 1 under VI Exceptional Wildlife Habitat Qualities on page A-7 states "Spotted Dog has the potential to provide new and exceptional opportunities for hunting and wildlife viewing by the public"

We don't believe that the public's best interests will be served in a safe manner of viewing wildlife and birding with bison roaming the area. Being chased or gored by a bison isn't our definition of public safety or enhancing the public's recreational opportunities'.

We held a meeting with the interior adjoining land owners last week. Again the Draft EA, Section VI Good Neighbor-page A-14 suggests that private in-holdings within the perimeter require special consideration. They were less than enthusiastic in the relationship with FWP. The landowners had to initiate with FWP first-the staff than responded in a very professional manner. However, the reverse should have been the norm and standard for dealing with the landowners. FWP should be engaging with the landowners not responding.

The neighbors are cattle producers. One would have thought that the introduction of bison on a neighboring landowner should have been covered under the Good Neighbor policy of the requirement that they be given special consideration. The newspaper was their first notification.

Needless to say, the entire incident has left all of us less that hopeful to achieve any type of meaningful and trusting working relationship with FWP.

The Powell County Commissioners would highly recommend to the Commission that the proposed motion either be tabled or include exclusionary language to exempt the Spotted Dog WMA and the Bob Marshall Wilderness Area from any potential feasibility study for FWP bison management plan.