

Testimony to the House Fish Wildlife and Parks Committee
SB 400
Submitted by Mac Minard
April 7, 2011

Greetings, my name is Mac Minard, I serve as the Executive Director of MOGA

I rise in support of SB 400 a bill which creates 2,000 B-10 licenses for use only in Congressionally designated Wilderness areas.

I want to thank Sen. Vincent for brining this important legislation forward and for the significant support he has generated for this bill throughout the process.

Opposition suggests that SB 400 is simply an end run around I-161, the citizen's initiative that eliminated the OSL, raised non-resident license substantially and eliminated controls on the Outfitting industry.

I believe you will see that SB 400 was intentionally designed to operate within the tenants of I-161, respect the vote of the people last November, and still afford some support for hunting related tourism vital to Montana's overall tourism industry and essential to local economies adjacent to designated Wilderness in Montana.

SB 400 is entirely consistent with the tenants of I-161 which were to treat every non-resident the same, generate more funding for FWP and access programs and increase access for resident hunters.

Treat all non-residents the same

- Same price as established by I-161 (including the annual increases tied to the consumer price index)
- All hunters are in a general draw
- No guarantees to outfitters

Generate additional revenue for the Department and for Access

- Fiscal note indicates a positive revenue stream of \$1.9 million per year
- Allows FWP to charge an additional \$25 for processing
- This is a very generous financial gain for a financially strapped Department and comes entirely from non-resident hunters.

Increase hunter Access

- SB 400 will allow non-resident hunters greater hunting opportunity on National Interest property.
- Increases revenue (see page 5 lines 11-12) by \$86,000 for the Departments hunter access fund to expand hunter access throughout the state.

Stability in Business

A stable business environment is essential to fostering and sustaining desirable industries in Montana. I-161, by eliminating the OSL in an effort to “treat all non-residents the same”, inadvertently (or deliberately?) created a highly unstable environment where success and failure of a business is now tied to the luck of the draw not to the quality of service provided.

SB 400 seeks to mitigate that condition by providing licenses that are to be used only in Wilderness Areas and thereby increasing the odds of drawing a license thus creating a small measure of stability.

If the tenants of I-161 were truly about equity and access there is no need to fear this bill, rather you would celebrate it.

If on the other hand I-161 was really the first of many steps intended to crush this important industry then you would be opposed.

Opponents claim we should wait and see the effects of I-161.

SB 400 is a proactive measure, squarely within the limits of I-161, as it was presented to the voters, and will mitigate unintended negative consequences to the Wilderness Outfitting Industry, preserve jobs and support the tourism economy of Montana.

I urge your support for this important legislation and VOTE DO PASS on SB 400.

Respectfully,
Mac Minard