

Senate Bill 124
January 13, 2011
Presented by Bob Lane
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Bob Lane, Chief Legal Counsel of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 124.

It has been about 30 years since the last recodification of FWP codes. FWP is proud to have been part of this Title 87 Working Group, and we are similarly proud of the committee's accomplishments and final product. This effort is a direct result of a request by the Montana Magistrates Association that was approved by the 2007 Legislature through HJR16 sponsored by then Representative Ripley.

The bill before you today is the culmination of many months of hard work and dedication under the constant guidance of Legislative Services Division (LSD) staff. FWP believes it will help significantly with clarification of fish and wildlife criminal statutes and their penalties. We believe that this bill addresses most of the issues identified in 2007. Additionally, please note that there will be no fiscal impact as a result of this effort.

It is important to underscore the fact that there have been no changes in the substance of the laws which address criminal offenses only. The committee has carefully reorganized these criminal statutes and attached the appropriate penalties to each criminal statute without changing or affecting your predecessors' legislative intentions. There are no changes to any of the civil statutes that authorize and restrict all other functions of FWP. The working group and LSD staff were extremely careful in this regard.

As you have heard, this bill will simplify Title 87 for everyone's use. We urge your recognition of this effort with the passage of SB124.