

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee –

My name is Annie Glover, and I am here on behalf of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT).

I am here today on behalf of the CSKT to oppose SB 144, a bill that would prevent Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks from relocating wild ~~buffalo~~ or bison or allowing free roaming bison in the state.

It is an understatement to say that the buffalo has played a profound role in the CSKT culture, and all the culture and life-ways of all Montana tribes from time immemorial. The buffalo remains a key component of CSKT culture today, and preserves a connection to tribal traditions that date back uncounted generations.

The bison that roam the Yellowstone ecosystem today are perhaps the only remaining conservation herd where cattle genes have not been detected. As such, they are an extremely valuable and irreplaceable resource that must not be lost. The CSKT feel particularly invested in preserving this nation's last wild herd inasmuch as many of today's Yellowstone bison are descendents of the Tribal bison herd from the Flathead Indian Reservation, a herd saved from extinction by CSKT Tribal members. It was this herd that began in the late 1880's that was used to help establish the National Bison Range on the Flathead Indian Reservation, and it was this same bison herd that was used to repopulate the Yellowstone bison herd that was on the verge of extinction.

Given the history, cultural and geographic ties that the CSKT have with the Yellowstone bison, it should come as no surprise that the CSKT would like to see the buffalo flourish on the Montana landscape and fully endorse the FWP's goals of returning the buffalo to their ancestral home. In particular, the CSKT support the translocation of brucellosis-free bison to any Montana tribe willing and able to take bison made available as part of the Yellowstone Bison Quarantine Project, pursuant to the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP). As you may know, Indian tribes are specifically identified as a priority to receive these bison under the IBMP. The CSKT opposes SB 144's stated goal of preventing the translocation of wild bison. The bison that would be made available to Montana tribes under the Quarantine Project and the IBMP have tested negative for brucellosis and pose no threat to the Montana's brucellosis-free classification. As a point of fact, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), the federal agency charged with establishing guidelines for, and enforcing this state's brucellosis-free classification is one of the participating

agencies in the IBMP-Yellowstone Bison Quarantine Project. These bison do not pose a disease threat and should be allowed to be moved to Tribal lands within Montana.

The CSKT also opposes SB 144's stated goal of preventing free roaming bison within the state of Montana. Pursuant to the 1855 Hellgate Treaty, CSKT Tribal members continue to hunt off-Reservation on open and unclaimed lands within their aboriginal territory. Wild Yellowstone bison that roam federal lands outside Yellowstone National Park continue to feed CSKT Tribal members and their families as they have for thousands of years. Hides, skulls and bison parts harvested in the hunt continue to allow CSKT Tribal members to practice cultural traditions that have been passed down through time. The CSKT fully endorses the FWP goals of maintaining wild bison as a part of ecosystem of Yellowstone, and hopes FWP will pursue its long-term goal of returning free roaming bison to their rightful place as a wild species on other suitable landscapes throughout Montana.

Given the cultural and historic ties the CSKT, and all Montana Tribes, have with the buffalo; coupled with the CSKT's ongoing desire to see this nation's last remaining wild buffalo herd maintained and expanded on the Montana landscape, the CSKT respectfully opposes SB 144 and asks this Committee not to pass the bill to the Senate floor.

Supremacy clause

Article 6, Section 2 U.S. constitution

Treaty law - gov't to gov't is supreme law of the land

Commerce clause

Article 1, Section 8

Federal law governs relationship of Indians in dealings w/ non-Indians

Hellgate treaty:

Allows hunting on common areas
& fishing (open, unclaimed & federal lands)

Not on private property