62nd Legislature HJ0037.01

| 1 | HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 37 |
|----|--|
| 2 | INTRODUCED BY W. WARBURTON |
| 3 | |
| 4 | A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF |
| 5 | MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS |
| 6 | RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION WITH LANDOWNERS. |
| 7 | |
| 8 | WHEREAS, two-thirds of the land in Montana is privately owned; and |
| 9 | WHEREAS, the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks estimates that 75% of antelope, 67% of |
| 10 | white-tailed deer, 62% of mule deer, and 37% of elk in Montana are distributed on private land; and |
| 11 | WHEREAS, the size of Montana's elk herd has tripled over the past 30 years; and |
| 12 | WHEREAS, big game populations have grown and are projected to continue growing; and |
| 13 | WHEREAS, much of that growth necessitates additional wildlife tolerance by private property owners |
| 14 | and |
| 15 | WHEREAS, private property owners in Montana welcome the aesthetic, recreational, and nostalgic value |
| 16 | that wildlife brings to Montana; and |
| 17 | WHEREAS, big game hunting is an important segment of Montana's tourism industry and brings jobs and |
| 18 | income to towns throughout the state; and |
| 19 | WHEREAS, restrictions on access to public land have placed more pressure on private property owners |
| 20 | to provide hunting access; and |
| 21 | WHEREAS, the Department's survey data reveals that approximately 96% of private property owners |
| 22 | provide public hunting access for deer and elk, 97% for antelope, and 95% for upland game birds; and |
| 23 | WHEREAS, the habits of hunters and the management practices of landowners are changing; and |
| 24 | WHEREAS, private landowners play the most important role in protecting Montana's wildlife resources. |
| 25 | |
| 26 | NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE |
| 27 | STATE OF MONTANA: |
| 28 | That the 62nd Legislature: |
| 29 | (1) recognizes that Montana's wildlife resources are becoming increasingly dependent on tolerance by |
| 30 | private property owners; and |

62nd Legislature HJ0037.01

(2) believes that the Department should evolve its management practices to work more closely with private property owners to ensure that private property owners have sufficient incentives to provide the highest quality habitat and ample public hunting opportunities and will continue to tolerate wildlife.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to study the factors that are contributing to the perceived deterioration of landowner tolerance of wildlife and ways the Department can improve its communication with landowners and facilitate a better relationship between hunters and landowners.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study actively invite and include the participation and input of landowners around the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 63rd Legislature.

17 - END -

