

1 SENATE BILL NO. 174

2 INTRODUCED BY G. VUCKOVICH, BRENDEN, HINKLE, KEANE, LEWIS

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4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND
5 PARKS FROM EXPENDING ANY FUNDS ON THE RELOCATION OR TRANSPLANTATION OF WILD
6 BUFFALO OR BISON ON THE SPOTTED DOG WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA; AMENDING SECTION
7 87-1-201, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

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9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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11 **Section 1.** Section 87-1-201, MCA, is amended to read:

12 **"87-1-201. Powers and duties -- limitation on expenditure of funds.** (1) The department shall
13 supervise all the wildlife, fish, game, game and nongame birds, waterfowl, and the game and fur-bearing animals
14 of the state and may implement voluntary programs that encourage hunting access on private lands and that
15 promote harmonious relations between landowners and the hunting public. The department possesses all powers
16 necessary to fulfill the duties prescribed by law and to bring actions in the proper courts of this state for the
17 enforcement of the fish and game laws and the rules adopted by the department.

18 (2) The department shall enforce all the laws of the state regarding the protection, preservation,
19 management, and propagation of fish, game, fur-bearing animals, and game and nongame birds within the state.

20 (3) ~~The~~ Except as provided in subsection (11), the department has the exclusive power to spend for the
21 protection, preservation, management, and propagation of fish, game, fur-bearing animals, and game and
22 nongame birds all state funds collected or acquired for that purpose, whether arising from state appropriation,
23 licenses, fines, gifts, or otherwise. Money collected or received from the sale of hunting and fishing licenses or
24 permits, from the sale of seized game or hides, from fines or damages collected for violations of the fish and
25 game laws, or from appropriations or received by the department from any other sources is under the control of
26 the department and is available for appropriation to the department.

27 (4) The department may discharge any appointee or employee of the department for cause at any time.

28 (5) The department may dispose of all property owned by the state used for the protection, preservation,
29 management, and propagation of fish, game, fur-bearing animals, and game and nongame birds that is of no
30 further value or use to the state and shall turn over the proceeds from the sale to the state treasurer to be credited

1 to the fish and game account in the state special revenue fund.

2 (6) The department may not issue permits to carry firearms within this state to anyone except regularly
3 appointed officers or wardens.

4 (7) The department is authorized to make, promulgate, and enforce reasonable rules and regulations
5 not inconsistent with the provisions of Title 87, chapter 2, that in its judgment will accomplish the purpose of
6 chapter 2.

7 (8) The department is authorized to promulgate rules relative to tagging, possession, or transportation
8 of bear within or outside of the state.

9 (9) (a) The department shall implement programs that:

10 (i) manage wildlife, fish, game, and nongame animals in a manner that prevents the need for listing under
11 87-5-107 or under the federal Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq.;

12 (ii) manage listed species, sensitive species, or a species that is a potential candidate for listing under
13 87-5-107 or under the federal Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531, et seq., in a manner that assists in the
14 maintenance or recovery of those species;

15 (iii) manage elk, deer, and antelope populations based on habitat estimates determined as provided in
16 87-1-322 and maintain elk, deer, and antelope population numbers at or below population estimates as provided
17 in 87-1-323. In implementing an elk management plan, the department shall, as necessary to achieve harvest
18 and population objectives, request that land management agencies open public lands and public roads to public
19 access during the big game hunting season.

20 (iv) address fire mitigation, pine beetle infestation, and wildlife habitat enhancement giving priority to
21 forested lands in excess of 50 contiguous acres in any state park, fishing access site, or wildlife management
22 area under the department's jurisdiction.

23 (b) In maintaining or recovering a listed species, a sensitive species, or a species that is a potential
24 candidate for listing, the department shall seek, to the fullest extent possible, to balance maintenance or recovery
25 of those species with the social and economic impacts of species maintenance or recovery.

26 (c) Any management plan developed by the department pursuant to this subsection (9) is subject to the
27 requirements of Title 75, chapter 1, part 1.

28 (d) This subsection (9) does not affect the ownership or possession, as authorized under law, of a
29 privately held listed species, a sensitive species, or a species that is a potential candidate for listing.

30 (10) The department shall publish an annual game count, estimating to the department's best ability the

1 numbers of each species of game animal, as defined in 87-2-101, in the hunting districts and administrative
2 regions of the state. In preparing the publication, the department may incorporate field observations, hunter
3 reporting statistics, or any other suitable method of determining game numbers. The publication must include an
4 explanation of the basis used in determining the game count.

5 (11) The department may not expend any funds to relocate or transplant wild buffalo or bison on the
6 Spotted Dog wildlife management area."

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8 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Effective date. [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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