EXHIBIT 7
DATE 2-21-13
HB 507

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Chairman Lee Randall and members of the House Agriculture committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Agriculture committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on HB 507. Mr. Chairman, I would also request that my testimony be shared with committee members and entered into the hearing record. Thank you.

HB 507 is a convoluted attempt to change the legal classification of a native species, the wild buffalo, under MCA 81-1-101, Montana's statute classifying domestic or feral bison as livestock.

We look forward to hearing the sponsor attempt to explain Montana's new definition of wild buffalo as interpreted by HB 507.

HB 507 mocks Montana's lawmaking process. We doubt that even the sponsor understands all of the legal implications and outcomes, government plans and appropriations of taxpayer money needed to comply with HB 507.

HB 507 attempts to place Yellowstone's migratory buffalo population under the jurisdiction of Montana's statewide bison reintroduction plan (MCA 87-1-216) and its extensive and costly provisions requiring the wild species to be managed as confined livestock.

HB 507 also requires Montana to develop a plan before any wild buffalo "may be released, transplanted, or allowed onto private or public land in Montana."

HB 507 further dictates that Montana may not "allow wild buffalo" on "any public or private land in Montana that is not in an area contiguous with the boundaries of Yellowstone national park designated by the department and the department of livestock as year-round habitat for wild buffalo or wild bison."

Under HB 507, this yet-to-be-declared "designation of year-round habitat by the departments may not be for longer than for a 4-year period and may not extend past the topographical boundaries of Gardiner basin and Hebgen Lake basin."

HB 507 also repeals fines and penalties for Montana's prohibition on intentionally feeding wildlife "in a manner that results in artificial concentration of game animals that may potentially contribute to the transmission of disease."

We support repealing MCA 81-2-121 provided Montana's prohibition on intentionally feeding wildlife is embodied in another statute.

Montana has a trustee authority for our native wildlife species and a constitutional responsibility, recognized in State v. Huebner (1992), to ensure "our wild places and the creatures that inhabit them are preserved for future generations."

A Fiscal Note for HB 507 has been requested to determine the costs borne by Montanans. These costs, along with the provisions of HB 507, remain an unbearable weight on the public purse and should not have to be paid any longer by taxpayers in Montana and across our nation.

HB 507 is not amendable and is not a bill worthy of becoming law. Thank you for taking action to by voting to defeat HB 507.

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