

**HB 274 – Sponsored by Rep. Ed Greef
House Business and Labor**

EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1/25/13
HB 274

**Testimony of Jean D. Johnson, representing Montana Outfitters & Guides Assn.
January 25, 2013**

Good morning, Chairman Berry and members of the House Business and Labor Committee. This is an important day for the outfitting industry. We are very grateful for Rep. Greef's willingness to sponsor this bill and to spend so much time with us to gain an understanding of why it is so significant.

HB 274 culminates an effort that began last spring. It picked up significant support from the interim Select Committee on Efficiency in Government last May when MOGA appeared before the committee. Rep. Reichner may remember that presentation.

HB 274 has three parts – Repeal, Revise, and Reduce. I'm going to speak briefly about the Repeal portion. The outfitter sponsored license was passed by the 1995 Legislature and in the ensuing years, it picked up layer after layer of statute and Administrative Rule. With the passage of I-161 in 2010 and the elimination of the OSL, several of those layers of statute were no longer applicable. As I testified on HB 133 Wednesday morning, Rep. Welborn carried a bill in the last session (HB 458) to begin the repeal of regulations associated with the outfitter sponsored license. We're here to continue that process.

Section 1 repeals two definitions – "base of operations" and "camp" that were imposed in the 1999 Session and that are no longer applicable. Section 1 also redefines net client hunter use to reflect changes in Administrative Rule regarding client logs. It also defines lands where NCHU is required. You may wonder why we still have NCHU when we no longer have the outfitter sponsored license. Very simply, NCHU represents an asset that outfitters were forced to own or purchase in order to serve clients. Although they technically no longer are regulated by NCHU, until the industry decides just what to do with it, it'll stay on the books in this limited fashion.

Fourteen sections are necessary to repeal "professional guide" – a classification that was tacked onto a bill in the 1995 session that has been used by three individuals in 18 years.

Section 2 (4)(d) deletes the requirement for outfitters to report leased acreage. The repealer in Section 19 eliminates the requirement for outfitters to pay an annual fee of \$2 per each client served in order to fund a map showing outfitter leases and Block Management. This fee was enacted in the 1999 Session and the map was a tool used in processing public comments on proposed expansions of Net Client Hunter Use. NCHU expansions were repealed in the 2011 Session. This doesn't mean information regarding leased acreage won't be required; it simply becomes an option of the Board of Outfitters.

Section 6 deletes the requirement for an outfitter to state the maximum number of participants to be accompanied at any one time – another regulation associated with the outfitter sponsored license.

Section 19 also repeals the requirement to transfer NCHU upon transfer of operations plans, which required a Board audit and takes countless hours of administrative staff time – none of which reflected the Board's core mission.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I've been a part of the industry's history since 1991. It seems to me this bill and HB 187 represents a new day for outfitters, a new opportunity to focus on the business model and the fact that these are truly important businesses for Montana's economy. Please support HB 274 with the technical amendments Rep. Greef has presented. Thank you.

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