EXHIBIT 12
DATE 1/22/2013
HB 163

IN FAVOR OF HB 163

Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

I rise today to speak in favor of HB 163. My name is Mary Ellen Schnur. I reside east of Townsend.

Mountain lions were re-classified from predators to game animals about fifty years ago. Instead of being hunted for bounty, they would be hunted for sport and trophy. There wasn't much known about mountain lions at that time, other than that they were generally reclusive, rarely encountered, and lived mostly in the heavily timbered western areas of the state. Season dates to be set by the Fish and Game Commission would help regulate the harvest. Within 10 days of harvest, a $50.00 trophy fee must be paid to legally possess and transport the head and hide. The purpose was to encourage selective hunting of larger males, and as a limiting factor on one hunter taking more than his fair share of relatively rare mountain lions over his lifetime.

Since the 1960's, we've come a long way in the science of mountain lion management. Fish Wildlife & Parks has instituted hunting districts, total quotas, gender subquotas, and limited entry permits to regulate and balance the mountain lion harvest. Mountain lions are no longer a rarity, and live successfully throughout the state.

The $50.00 trophy fee no longer has a purpose, and is inconsistent with management strategies for other species. Science controls the harvest of mountain lions. Harvest of a mountain lion must be reported to Fish Wildlife & Parks within 12 hours of harvest. The head and hide of the lion must be presented to Fish Wildlife & Parks within ten days of harvest, for tagging and tooth extraction. The $50.00 trophy fee is collected then.

Fish Wildlife & Parks does not charge a trophy fee for checking in any other animal, although check-in is required for bighorn sheep, wolves, bears, mountain goats, and several furbearers. None of our neighboring states charge a trophy fee for harvest or trophy possession of any animal.

The $50.00 trophy fee is an unfair assessment against a hunter who has successfully harvested one animal of an abundant, well regulated species.

I ask your support for HB 163, to eliminate the $50.00 trophy fee requirement to possess and transport a legally harvested mountain lion, in the interest of consistency and fairness.