EXHIBIT 14
DATE 3/14/2013
SB 197

Online Survey of Montana's Hunter Education Instructors Regarding Senate Bill 197

Background Information

On March 6, at the request of a Legislator, FWP implemented an online survey of Montana's hunter education instructors regarding Senate Bill 197. Approximately 720 instructors were sent an email invitation to participate in the survey. A fifty percent response rate was achieved for this survey as of the time of this report (March 11, 2013).

The survey included the following questions:

1. To what extent do you oppose or support this bill? (Strongly Oppose, Oppose, Neither Oppose or Support, Support , or Strongly Support)
2. Why do you support this bill? (Open-Ended Response). *This question was only answered by respondents who indicated the support or strongly support the bill.*
3. Why do you oppose this bill? (Open-Ended Response). *This question was only answered by respondents who indicated they oppose or strongly oppose the bill.*
4. Are there any changes to this bill that would result in you supporting its passage? (No or Yes). *This question was only answered by respondents who indicated they oppose or strongly oppose the bill.*

   If yes, what specific changes to this bill would result in you supporting its passage? (Open-Ended Response)

Survey Results

51% Strongly oppose the bill
24% Oppose
6% Neither oppose or support
12% Support
7% Strongly support

The most frequently stated reasons for <u>supporting</u> Senate Bill 197 included:

- It will help get youth hooked on hunting early on in life. The sooner they can hunt the better...before other activities take over their time and attention. *(no fewer than 20 comments)*
- It will enhance opportunities for families to hunt together. *(no fewer than 10 comments)*
- It will promote hunting to youth. *(no fewer than 10 comments)*
- This has worked in other states. *(no fewer than 5 comments)*
- It will help to get youth outdoors earlier with the opportunity to enjoy nature. *(no fewer than 5 comments)*

The most frequently stated reasons for opposing Senate Bill 197 included:

- Most youth 9-11 years of age are NOT mentally and emotionally mature enough to hunt and/or handle firearms. *(no fewer than 80 comments)*
- All hunters, including youth, should be required to successfully complete formal hunter education training before being allowed to hunt most game species in Montana. *(no fewer than 60 comments)*
- Most youth 9-11 years or age are NOT physically capable of hunting and/or handling firearms that are primarily made for adults...this is especially the case for hunting larger big game animals. *(no fewer than 50 comments)*
- General concerns about safety and specific concerns about novice hunters not having formal training in firearms safety and gun handling. *(no fewer than 40 comments)*
- Concerns about mentors in general. Not all adults are capable of offering sound mentoring advice to novice hunters. *(no fewer than 40 comments)*
- Nine years of age is too young. *(no fewer than 30 comments)*
- Concerns it would likely lead to an increase in bad hunter habits, poor hunter behavior, poor hunter ethics and safety, and increased illegal hunting activities. Many novice hunters would likely need to be retrained after their three years are up...to correct any bad habits they may have formed in the absence of having no formal hunter education training. *(no fewer than 30 comments)*
- Concerns it would likely lead to more hunting accidents in the future. *(no fewer than 20 comments)*
- Concerns that it would undermine and diminish the well established success and value of Montana's hunter education program. *(no fewer than 20 comments)*
- Concerns about the potential for mentor abuse of the system—for example, "just another tag for dad to fill." *(no fewer than 15 comments)*
- The current system is working...why change it? *(no fewer than 10 comments)*
- It would lead to inconsistencies in the messages being communicated regarding appropriate hunter ethics and safety in Montana. *(no fewer than 10 comments)*

A little less than a third of the respondents who oppose or strongly oppose the bill indicated there are some specific changes to the bill that would result in their supporting its passage. The most frequently reported changes included:

- Require hunter education training for all youth. *(no fewer than 30 comments)*
- Both the mentor and the student should be required to attend hunter education training in a class setting and/or in the field. *(no fewer than 15 comments)*
- Three years is too much. One year only. *(no fewer than 10 comments)*
- The mentor should not be allowed to carry a gun when mentoring a youth hunter...the focus should be on the youth. *(no fewer than 10 comments)*
- The mentor should be required to have formal hunter education training. *(no fewer than 5 comments)*
- Increase the minimum age. Nine years of age is too young. *(no fewer than 5 comments)*