

House Bill 323
March 5, 2013
Presented by Ken McDonald
Senate Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here today on behalf of the Director in support of House Bill 323.

Grizzly bears are recovered in the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems, and hopefully will be delisted in both areas by 2015. There is no strict language calling for a compensation program for livestock losses to grizzly bears as there is in the wolf plan, although compensation for livestock losses was addressed in both the SW Montana and Western Montana grizzly bear plans. Specifically, both the SW and Western plans state that FWP will encourage private programs and funding for compensation of livestock losses. Because robust grizzly bear populations are desired by a majority of Montanans and the American public, it is logical that those entities help pay for losses to livestock producers. Inclusion of grizzly bears in the Livestock Loss Program seems like a logical approach for addressing compensation for grizzly bear depredation and provides a mechanism for both private and public funding.

I will be available to answer any questions.