

House Bill 136
March 5, 2013
Presented by Paul Sihler
Senate Fish and Game Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am Paul Sihler, Administrator of the Field Services Division of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here today on behalf of the Director in support of House Bill 136.

Representative McClafferty has introduced HB 136 at the request of the Department. The bill is a cleanup bill that addresses several changes related to non-resident youth combination licenses that are needed in order to better implement two bills that passed last session.

Montana statute provides a half-priced nonresident youth combination license to youths who are sponsored by immediate family members. The sponsor, often a parent, must hold either a non-resident big-game combination license (Class B-10), a non-resident deer combination license (Class B11) license or a resident deer or elk license at the time a non-resident youth applies for this sponsored license.

The 2011 Legislature passed a bill (SB 136) that created a "Nonresident Native License" which added two new license types -- a Class B-15 Nonresident Elk license and Class B-7 Nonresident Deer license. HB 136 would add these two licenses to the list of licenses a sponsor of a nonresident youth may hold, providing additional opportunity youths to hunt with family members. HB 136 also eliminates the statutory requirement for the sponsor to hold a license at the time of application and the requirement that the department offer these licenses for sale on March 1. These changes will allow family members to apply together for hunting license applications that are available in January. The requirement for the sponsor to hold a valid license and accompany the youth in the field will not be changed.

For your information, in 2012 the Department issued 388 B-13 Nonresident Youth Combination Licenses.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to thank Representative McClafferty for sponsoring this bill, thank the committee for its time today, and the Department requests a "do pass" for HB 136.