

EXHIBIT # 9
DATE 3/10/15
SB 284

March 10, 2015

Helena, MT

World Wildlife Fund Testimony to House Agriculture Committee regarding SB 284

Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my testimony. My name is Dennis Jorgensen and I speak to you today on behalf of World Wildlife Fund and our approximately 4000 Montana members.

It is our belief that this bill is premised on the fact that County oversight of bison management is necessary to avoid the state imposing bison on unwilling counties, without prior County consent or approval.

Senator Brenden has stated several times that bison moved to Fort Peck in March of 2012 were moved in secrecy, without any public awareness that would have allowed the County to respond sooner to prevent the move. I am here to tell you that Senator Brenden is misrepresenting the facts. Although it may not be a paper read by Senator Brenden or many rural Montanans off reservation, an announcement of the move appeared in Indian Country Today on March 16th, 2012 (a full 4 days before the move) for all to see, including quotes from the Fort Peck Tribes Fish and Game Department Director, Robbie Magnan acknowledging delivery would take place March 20th 2012.

SB 212 already provides for public/private consent before public bison are allowed to graze any site, and therefore this bill is redundant and would start us down the path of County officials dictating wildlife management in a piecemeal fashion, rather than State experts holding that authority.

Recognizing that despite fictitious claims to the contrary, the State and the Tribes have been honest in their dealings in distributing bison to date, and understanding that statute already protects the interests of private landowners, we ask that you vote no on SB 284.

Thank you,

Dennis Jorgensen

World Wildlife Fund.

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