

HB Bill 146  
January 15, 2015  
Presented by Jim Kropp  
House Fish, Wildlife, & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Jim Kropp, Enforcement Division Administrator for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). I am here today on behalf of the Director in opposition to House Bill 146.

While the Department appreciates the intent of the sponsor for this bill to increase funding for the popular Block Management Hunting Access Program, the Department respectfully opposes the bill because it simply shifts a significant amount of money, over \$1.4 million, from the General License Account, which funds a wide array of critical Department programs and activities, to the earmarked Hunting Access Account which primarily funds only the Block Management Program.

The Department's General License Account is already facing significant shortfalls, which the Department hopes to correct in another bill, House Bill 140. That bill will be introduced to this committee sometime later in this session. The recommendations contained in that bill are the result of nearly a year's worth of effort put in by the Citizen's License and Funding Advisory Council, whose members spent months studying the agency's current funding and license structure prior to developing their recommendations. If passed in its entirety, HB 140 keeps the department budget balanced for four more years at current levels, and doesn't accommodate any program growth such as this.

We view House Bill 146 as having the potential to significantly exacerbate the structural balance of the General License Account, and for that reason, the Department requests committee members vote "Do not pass" on House Bill 146.

