

1 _____ BILL NO. _____

2 INTRODUCED BY _____
3 (Primary Sponsor)

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO FISHERIES
5 MANAGEMENT; ESTABLISHING A SPORT FISHING ENHANCEMENT POLICY; PROVIDING FINDINGS
6 AND DEFINITIONS; REVISING MANAGEMENT FOR CERTAIN SPECIES; AND REQUIRING AN UPDATED
7 STATE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN."

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9 WHEREAS, sport fishing is part of Montana's rich outdoor heritage, and fishing is culturally important to
10 more than 200,000 residents and 100,000 nonresident visitors; and

11 WHEREAS, angling generates nearly \$1 billion in annual spending statewide; and

12 WHEREAS, the total number of angler days in Montana has declined in many of the past few years;

13 and

14 WHEREAS, a large percentage of the sport fish caught in Montana are nonnative fish species.

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16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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18 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Sport fishing enhancement policy -- definition -- reporting.** (1) In
19 recognition of the cultural and economic importance of sport fishing in the state, the legislature establishes the
20 following sport fishing enhancement policy:

21 (a) The department shall take all appropriate steps to improve and enhance fishing opportunities for
22 fish species of greatest importance.

23 (b) By January 1, 2023, the department shall update the state fisheries management plan to ensure
24 the maintenance of healthy and viable populations of fish species of greatest importance. The department shall
25 seek and consider public input in the process, including through extensive public meetings.

26 (c) For any management project to assist native threatened, endangered, or sensitive fish species
27 that reduces sport fishing opportunities for a fish species of greatest importance, including but not limited to
28 rotenone treatment or reduced catch for each day or allowable in-possession limits approved by the

1 commission, the commission shall consider replacement sport fishing opportunities for that species.

2 (2) For the purposes of this section, the term "fish species of greatest importance" includes rainbow,
3 brown, brook, westslope cutthroat, Yellowstone cutthroat, and bull trout, artic grayling, mountain whitefish,
4 northern pike, walleye, yellow perch, kokanee salmon, paddlefish, bass, crappie, catfish, sauger, lake trout and
5 lake whitefish, and other game fish.

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7 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Codification instruction. [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an
8 integral part of Title 87, chapter 3, part 2, and the provisions of Title 87, chapter 3, part 2, apply to [section 1].

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