

HOUSE BILL NO. 661
INTRODUCED BY BARRETT

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS TO MANAGE AND SUPERVISE THE WILDLIFE OF MONTANA IN A SUSTAINABLE MANNER, ~~BASED ON THE RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP OF ALL LANDS~~, THROUGH ANNUAL INVENTORIES AND STATUS REPORTS OF THE WILDLIFE SPECIES EXISTING IN EACH ADMINISTRATIVE REGION; REQUIRING THAT THE REGIONAL INFORMATION BE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC AT EACH REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS AND THAT THE STATEWIDE INFORMATION BE REPORTED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL ON A BIENNIAL BASIS; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

~~WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks was created 102 years ago to restore and supervise the wildlife of Montana; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the restoration of Montana's wildlife species was successfully completed decades ago, thanks to the combined efforts of property owners, sportsmen and sportswomen, and the Department in working toward this goal; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the Department chose to go beyond restoration and continued to increase the populations of certain big game species because of the species' popularity; and~~

~~WHEREAS, today, the result of continued increases of popular game species in Montana means record high numbers of those species, which has forced those species into areas of the state where they never previously existed; and~~

~~WHEREAS, this huge unbalanced increase of certain big game species is having a detrimental effect on land in Montana, both public and private, on users of that land, and on other wildlife species dependent on the same habitat; and~~

~~WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the Department manage the wildlife species in Montana in a sustainable manner based on responsible stewardship.~~

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

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Sustainable management of wildlife required -- availability of inventory and status information. (1) In order to manage and supervise the wildlife of Montana in a sustainable manner,

~~based on the responsible stewardship of land, both public and private,~~ the department shall prepare, for each of the department's administrative regions:

- (a) accurate annual game counts;
 - (b) an inventory and status assessment of all predators in each region;
 - (c) an inventory and status assessment of other species in the region ~~that are dependent on the wildlife habitat of that region,~~ including any current or future threatened species, endangered species, or species of concern; and
 - (d) an annual compilation of the information in subsections (1)(a) through (1)(c) relative to each administrative region, which must be made available for public inspection at each regional headquarters.
- (2) The department shall prepare a biennial report of the annual information compiled pursuant to subsection (1)(d) relative to all administrative regions in the state, which must be made available to the environmental quality council, created in 5-16-101, prior to each regular legislative session.

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

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

- END -