

1 HOUSE BILL NO. 609

2 INTRODUCED BY P. CONNELL

3

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTERIM STUDY OF HUNTING AND FISHING
5 LICENSING; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND
6 A TERMINATION DATE."

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8 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature establishes hunting and fishing license fees; and

9 WHEREAS, hunting and fishing license fees provide approximately \$34 million annually to fund most of
10 the operations of the department of fish, wildlife, and parks; and

11 WHEREAS, hunting and fishing license fees are historically set at a stable level for 8 to 10 years, when
12 revenue exceeds expenses and creates a surplus in the general license account; and

13 WHEREAS, revenue from hunting and fishing licenses no longer matches expenses, and the general
14 license account has declined since fiscal year 2010; and

15 WHEREAS, the last major adjustment to hunting and fishing license fees was in 2005; and

16 WHEREAS, reduced cost hunting and fishing licenses for certain population groups result in
17 approximately \$4 million less in general license account revenue; and

18 WHEREAS, the sale of hunting and fishing licenses has declined in recent years, most notably in 2011;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, the general license account may be close to a critical point, and hunting and fishing license
21 fee increases may be necessary to fund current operations.

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

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25 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Interim study -- evaluation of hunting and fishing licensing --**
26 **reporting.** (1) The environmental quality council shall conduct a study of Montana's hunting and fishing license
27 statutes and fees, including:

28 (a) the appropriate roles of hunting and fishing license buyers and other fish and wildlife users in funding
29 fish and wildlife management;

30 (b) options for improving the structural balance between revenue and expenditures for fish and wildlife

1 management;

2 (c) options for changing and simplifying Montana's hunting and fishing license structure and statutes;

3 (d) options to improve services and better meet the needs of license buyers;

4 (e) an assessment of the impact of free and reduced cost hunting and fishing licenses on the funding
5 for fish and wildlife management and whether any of these licenses should be modified; and

6 (f) a comparison of license structures and fees in other states.

7 (2) The committee shall prepare a final report of its findings and conclusions and of its recommendations
8 and shall prepare draft legislation whenever appropriate.

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10 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated \$10,000 from the general fund for
11 the biennium beginning July 1, 2013, to the legislative services division for use by the environmental quality
12 council to complete the study required by [section 1].

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

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16 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Termination. [This act] terminates December 31, 2014.

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