

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



ANGELA McLEAN
LT. GOVERNOR

May 4, 2015

The Honorable Linda McCulloch
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Secretary McCulloch:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 334 (SB 334), "AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF 'GAME ANIMAL' TO INCLUDE GAME BIRDS AND FURBEARERS; REVISING THE DEFINITION OF 'PREDATORY ANIMAL'; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 7-3-1105, 7-3-1222, 7-31-4110, 50-50-401, 87-1-293, 87-2-101, 87-2-520, 87-2-702, 87-2-803, 87-3-128, 87-4-406, 87-4-414, 87-4-418, 87-4-427, 87-6-101, 87-6-202, 87-6-204, 87-6-205, 87-6-206, 87-6-207, 87-6-208, 87-6-214, 87-6-215, 87-6-301, 87-6-304, 87-6-305, 87-6-401, 87-6-403, 87-6-404, 87-6-405, 87-6-411, AND 87-6-904, MCA."

SB 334, by changing the definition of game animal, has the potential to alter the very foundation of wildlife management in Montana. The reach of this bill goes deep into administrative regulations and policies that have been embedded in wildlife management for decades. A change like that proposed by SB 334 deserves a comprehensive conversation involving professionals and constituents alike that focuses on the necessity of such a fundamental shift, viewed against the existing substantive management by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Because that conversation did not occur, unintended consequences to existing management practices were discovered late in the process, requiring multiple lengthy amendments. These amendments further complicated the real intent and value of this legislation. It is likely that other unintended consequences will be discovered if SB 334 becomes law.

For these reasons, I veto SB 334.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Bullock".

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Debby Barrett, President of the Senate
Austin Knudsen, Speaker of the House