

HOUSE BILL NO. 305

INTRODUCED BY B. HARRIS

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO COUNTY BOUNTIES ON PREDATORS; ALLOWING COUNTIES TO ESTABLISH THE DOLLAR AMOUNT OF BOUNTIES; REVISING FUNDING SOURCES FOR BOUNTIES; REVISING THE TERM OF THE COUNTY LIVESTOCK FEE; REVISING APPOINTMENT OF BOUNTY INSPECTORS; AMENDING SECTIONS 81-7-201, 81-7-204, 81-7-303, AND 81-7-603, MCA; AND REPEALING SECTION 81-7-202, MCA."

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

Section 1. Section 81-7-201, MCA, is amended to read:

"81-7-201. County fee for bounties on predatory animals -- definition. (1) Whenever the owners or agents of the owners of not less than 51% of the livestock of any county in this state present a petition to the board of county commissioners asking for the imposition of a fee upon the livestock of the county for the purpose of paying bounties on predatory animals killed in the county, the board of county commissioners shall impose the fee on all livestock in the county. The fee must remain in effect until a subsequent petition is submitted to modify or eliminate the fee.

(2) The board of county commissioners shall determine the dollar amount of the bounty to be paid on each predatory animal.

(3) The board of county commissioners may appoint bounty inspectors in addition to those provided for in 81-7-112.

(4) (a) Except as provided in subsection (4)(b), for the purposes of this part, "predatory animal" has the meaning provided in 81-7-101.

(b) The term does not include game animals or animals that are unlawfully taken."

Section 2. Section 81-7-204, MCA, is amended to read:

"81-7-204. Presentation of skins -- affidavit. A person claiming bounty on a predatory animal under this part shall present the green skin or pelt of the animal, with all four feet attached, to one of the bounty inspectors provided for in ~~81-7-202~~ 81-7-112 or 81-7-201 and shall make an affidavit that the animal was killed

1 within the county where the bounty is claimed. The affidavit must be corroborated by at least two reputable
 2 stockowners of the county to the effect that they know or have good cause to believe that the animal was killed
 3 within that county. For the purpose of this part, each bounty inspector ~~provided for in this part~~ is empowered to
 4 administer oaths. The bounty inspector shall endorse upon the affidavit the inspector's approval or disapproval
 5 of the claim and shall cut from the skin or pelt the four feet. The person applying for the bounty shall then present
 6 the affidavit, with the endorsements, to the county auditor or, in counties not having an auditor, to the county clerk,
 7 who shall attach the affidavit to a claim against the county bounty fund and present it to the board of county
 8 commissioners for action, the same as any other claim against the county."

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10 **Section 3.** Section 81-7-303, MCA, is amended to read:

11 **"81-7-303. County commissioners permitted to require per capita license fee on sheep.** (1) To
 12 defray the expense of protection, the board of county commissioners of a county may require all owners or
 13 persons in possession of a sheep 1 year of age or older in the county on the regular assessment date of each
 14 year as provided in 15-24-903 to pay a per capita license fee in an amount to be determined by the board. All
 15 owners or persons in possession of a sheep 1 year of age or older coming into the county after the regular
 16 assessment date and subject to the per capita levy under the provisions of Title 15, chapter 24, part 9, are subject
 17 to payment of the license fee.

18 (2) Upon the order of the board of county commissioners, the license fees may be imposed by entering
 19 the name of the licensee upon the assessment record of the county by the department of revenue. The license
 20 fees are payable to and must be collected by the county treasurer. When levied, the fees are a lien upon the
 21 property, both real and personal, of the licensee. If the person against whom the license fee is levied does not
 22 own real estate against which the license fee is or may become a lien, then the license fee is payable immediately
 23 upon its levy and the treasurer shall collect the fee in the manner provided by law for the collection of personal
 24 property taxes that are not a lien upon real estate.

25 (3) When collected, the fees must be placed in the predatory animal control fund and the fund may be
 26 expended on order of the board of county commissioners of the county for predatory animal control, only including
 27 bounties paid pursuant to Title 81, chapter 7, part 2. Interest earned on money in the fund must be deposited in
 28 the fund.

29 (4) Money from any source may be deposited in the predatory animal control fund provided for in this
 30 section to carry out the provisions of this part."

