

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 28
INTRODUCED BY D. BARTEL

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO DENY THE BISON GRAZING PROPOSAL BY THE AMERICAN PRAIRIE RESERVE.

WHEREAS, the American Prairie Reserve (APR) controls private properties tied to 18 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) grazing allotments in Fergus, Petroleum, Phillips, and Valley counties; and

WHEREAS, the APR has requested that the BLM fundamentally shift long-established grazing practices on the 18 BLM allotments, which encompass 250,000 acres of public property; and

WHEREAS, APR has petitioned to change the allotments from seasonal or rotational grazing to year-round grazing and remove the interior fencing on those allotments; and

WHEREAS, the APR proposes to allow the year-round, continuous grazing of public land by bison, which would impact the future grazing viability of the allotments; and

WHEREAS, the destruction of rangeland and wildlife habitat that would be caused by the change in the grazing status would threaten the livelihoods of ranching families who have made this area their home for generations; and

WHEREAS, the existing BLM designation for managed grazing is what science dictates the rangeland can support; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the BLM to ensure the future vitality of these public parcels is protected; and

WHEREAS, the removal of interior fences will eliminate the ability of BLM to control the access of bison to certain parcels to shorten grazing permits in response to drought or fire to protect the rangeland; and

WHEREAS, year-round grazing will lead to overgrazing, which could cause irreparable harm to the rangeland, making it unsuitable for future use by both livestock and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, thousands of head of cattle, and the economic activity that they provide for the area, have been displaced by the APR -- impacting main street businesses and decreasing the local tax base; and

WHEREAS, the APR is intent on creating a wild, free-roaming bison herd, which will impact the property

1 rights of neighboring landowners; and

2 WHEREAS, the landowners neighboring the APR would be forced to bear the cost of damage done by
3 free-roaming bison; and

4 WHEREAS, free-roaming bison would not be vaccinated for brucellosis; and

5 WHEREAS, free-roaming bison would greatly increase the threat of disease transmission to livestock
6 and wildlife; and

7 WHEREAS, Montana farmers, ranchers, and groups whose primary focus is the management of bison,
8 have stated that the integrated management of grazing land, water, animal health testing, disease traceability,
9 and animal identification are all necessary -- regardless of whether bison are classified as domestic animals or
10 wildlife.

11
12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
13 STATE OF MONTANA:

14 (1) That it is essential for the preservation of the future viability of Montana's rangeland that the BLM
15 deny the petition by the APR to alter grazing permits on the 18 allotments under the control of APR.

16 (2) That the denial of the proposed APR grazing permit change is critical for the health of Montana's
17 livestock and wildlife.

18 (3) That private landowners and communities should not bear the cost of damages incurred by the lack
19 of integrated bison management in the APR's grazing proposal.

20 (4) That the denial of the APR grazing proposal would protect Montana farmers, ranchers, and
21 communities.

22 (5) That the BLM should deny the APR bison grazing proposal.

23 (6) That the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the United States Congress, the
24 Department of the Interior, and the Bureau of Land Management.

25 - END -