

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32

2 INTRODUCED BY E. MCCLAFFERTY, G. HERTZ, R. LYNCH, A. OLSEN, W. CURDY, M. DUNWELL, J.

3 ELLIS, D. HAYMAN, C. POPE, S. WEBBER, D. LOGE, S. MORIGEAU, J. GROSS, K. BOGNER, P.

4 FLOWERS, M. FOX, T. FRANCE, S. O'BRIEN

5
6 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
7 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF HUNTER OVERCROWDING AND HUNTING
8 PRESSURE IN THE STATE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE
9 REPORTED TO THE 69TH LEGISLATURE.

10
11 WHEREAS, the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks reported an increase in hunting license sales
12 of more than 1,160,000 from 2012 to 2022; and

13 WHEREAS, public hunting access in many areas has declined, including a 17% overall decrease in
14 block management acreage available for hunting access from 2010 to 2021; and

15 WHEREAS, the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks reported that hunting pressure in the state
16 results from more hunters hunting for longer periods of time in smaller areas; and

17 WHEREAS, many hunters report overcrowding and limited success in hunting areas across the state;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Article IX section 7, of the Montana Constitution provides that the harvesting of wild game
20 animals is a heritage that must forever be preserved to the individual citizens of the state.

21
22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
23 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

24 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
25 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to investigate hunter overcrowding and hunting pressure,
26 including:

27 (1) evaluating data from the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks related to hunting, including
28 but not limited to license sales, hunter days in the field, hunter harvests, hunter success rates, and animal

- 1 populations, as well as relevant science on animal population trends in the state;
- 2 (2) examining the effectiveness of methods used by the department to determine animal
- 3 populations and appropriate harvest numbers of animals within hunting districts;
- 4 (3) identifying factors that may contribute to hunter overcrowding and hunting pressure, such as
- 5 the availability of accessible hunting lands and the number of nonresident hunters;
- 6 (4) evaluating initiatives in other states to address hunter overcrowding and hunting pressure; and
- 7 (5) proposing solutions to reduce hunter overcrowding and hunting pressure, such as the reduction
- 8 of nonresident licenses, the reduction of permits, permit drawings, the expansion of hunting district borders, and
- 9 the adjustment of season lengths.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee collaborate with the general public and

11 relevant stakeholders to examine this topic, including but not limited to the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and

12 Parks.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be

14 presented to and reviewed by the Environmental Quality Council.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review

16 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

18 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 69th Legislature.

19 - END -