



**BUFFALO FIELD CAMPAIGN**

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Chairman Duane Ankney and members of the House Appropriations  
committee Montana House of Representatives  
PO Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Appropriations committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on HB  
484. Mr. Chairman, I would also request that my testimony be shared  
with committee members and entered into the hearing record. Thank  
you.

Buffalo Field Campaign is adamantly opposed to HB 484, for many  
reasons.

The sponsor of HB 484 would have Montanans pay \$490,812, a  
tremendous waste of money to enforce the bill's no migratory buffalo in  
Montana mandate.

HB 484 takes discretionary authority in MCA 81-2-120 and makes it  
mandatory for the Dept. of Livestock and Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks  
to shoot, harass by 'hazing', capture for quarantine and trap for slaughter  
all buffalo migrating into Montana.

HB 484 also requires the Dept. of Livestock to adopt rules enforcing MCA  
81-2-120. Once adopted, the rules could be litigated for enforcement  
because HB 484 mandates the Dept. of Livestock remove all migratory  
buffalo from our state.

Who pays for HB 484?

Montana 'pays' hardly anything -- but is the recipient of well over \$6 million American taxpayer dollars that has funded the government destruction of thousands of wild buffalo since 2000 under the governor-approved plan embodied in MCA 81-2-120.

Montana is a recipient of millions of dollars in federal taxpayer welfare to enforce the obsolete bison management plan embodied in MCA 81-2-120: <http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/legislative/taxpayerfunding.html>

Now thirteen years into its 'bison management plan' that costs over \$3,000,000 taxpayer dollars every year (U.S. Government Accountability Office 2008) Montanans will now pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in new costs under HB 484.

What is the justification for a fiscally conservative legislature to spend so much taxpayer money using all of the police powers of the state to destroy our last wild buffalo?

There is no evidence of migratory buffalo infecting cattle since brucellosis was introduced by cattle, and detected in buffalo in 1917 (Meagher and Meyer 1994).

There is preliminary evidence (Beja-Pereira 2009) that all recent brucellosis infections in cattle in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming can be traced to migratory elk.

Outside of Yellowstone National Park, migratory buffalo occupy less than a fraction of 1% of the nearly 100 million acres of land in Montana. Yet HB 484 would reduce this fraction of habitat to zero for this valued native grassland species.

We strongly object, in the strongest possible terms, to any legislative act that attempts to destroy Montanan's heritage of wild buffalo.

Bison as a native species are in need of habitat and conservation and not taxpayer funded, government annihilation, as HB 484 would have it.

The actual status (S2) of bison as a wildlife species in Montana is "At risk because of very limited and/or potentially declining population numbers,

range and/or habitat, making it vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state. Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks also designated bison a Tier I species: "Greatest conservation need. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has a clear obligation to use its resources to implement conservation actions that provide direct benefit to these species, communities, and focus areas." (Adams and Dood, Montana FWP 2011) HB 484 also amends Montana's statewide bison reintroduction plan (MCA 87-1-216) to include migratory buffalo in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

One outcome of bringing buffalo also under the jurisdiction of MCA 87-1-216 would require Montana to enforce strict 'containment measures' and confine buffalo migrating onto private or public land in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

HB 484 would also require the state to somehow seek prior authorization from private landowners for migratory buffalo to roam in Montana.

What about the private landowners that have long welcomed migratory buffalo on their property?

Private landowners like the Galanis family who own 800 acres on Horse Butte peninsula in Hebgen Basin have their ranch invaded by low-flying helicopters and trespassed by agents from the state of Montana to harass buffalo off land the owners have made repeatedly clear buffalo are welcome to be on.

(Please see the attached photo exhibit of the Montana Dept. of Livestock using a helicopter to harass buffalo off the privately owned Yellowstone Ranch Preserve on Horse Butte peninsula).

If HB 484 becomes law, these, along with many other private property owners' rights will continue to be trampled upon by the state of Montana as HB 484 prohibits migratory buffalo from occupying habitat in the state.

So if you are a property owner in Montana who desires migratory buffalo to be left alone on your land you have no private property rights under HB 484 and your land will continue to be subjected to trespass and government intrusion to harm America's last wild buffalo.

Finally, HB 484 is legislative overreach that attempts to amend ten laws to what end? To not permit buffalo as a native wildlife species to exist in Montana period.

HB 484 is not amendable. Thank you for taking action to by voting to defeat HB 484.

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