



BUFFALO FIELD CAMPAIGN

P.O. BOX 957 WEST YELLOWSTONE, MONTANA 59758

(406) 646-0070 PHONE (406) 646-0071 FAX

<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org>

February 19, 2015

Chairman Taylor Brown and members of the Senate Agriculture,
Livestock and Irrigation committee, Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

BUFFALO FIELD CAMPAIGN COMMENTS ON SB 342 – CONSIDERATION OF AMENDMENTS OFFERED

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Agriculture, Livestock and
Irrigation committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on SB
342. Mr. Chairman, I request that my testimony be entered into the
hearing record. Thank you.

Buffalo Field Campaign encourages consideration by the committee of
amending the definition of imminent threat at 81-2-120(5) as follows:

For the purposes of this section, the term “imminent threat”
means the department is reasonably certain that domestic
cattle will come into direct contact with birthing tissues and
fluids from an adult, female wild buffalo or wild bison on
private land.

The definition would exclude bull buffalo at all times of the year and cow
buffalo after the calving season. The definition would only include the
presence of a pregnant adult cow buffalo on private land where cattle are
present. The department would have to be reasonably certain that the
circumstances would permit cattle to come into direct contact with
birthing tissues and fluids. Finally, the definition would allow for physical
barriers such as fencing that would prevent direct contact with cattle.

Buffalo Field Campaign also encourages consideration by the committee of amending 81-2-120(a) and (b), to read:

“Only if the live wild buffalo or wild bison represents an imminent threat of transmitting a dangerous disease,”

The purpose of the amendments is to prevent unfounded government actions by the Department of Livestock that have pointlessly destroyed hundreds of wild buffalo and unnecessarily harassed the migratory species from occupying their native habitat in Montana.

Such punitive actions have also included livestock agents trespassing on private lands where wild buffalo are welcomed by the landowners. (Please see our attached handout on SB 342 for documentation on the government impacts of 81-2-120).

The outcome sought is to stop wasteful government actions by the Department of Livestock that have harmed wild buffalo without cause, degraded wildlife habitat, and disrupted the ecosystem upon which migratory buffalo and many native species depend.

The effect would be to reel in a bureaucracy that has become entrenched around the millions of taxpayer dollars spent annually to prop up the Interagency Bison Management Plan, the governor approved plan as called for in 81-2-120.

The Montana Legislature has yet to ask for an accounting and shed light on the more than \$9,000,000 in American taxpayer funding spent by the Department of Livestock on its wild buffalo operations since 2000. Montanans deserve a public accounting for how our taxpayer money is being spent and how wild buffalo are managed in Montana.

Buffalo Field Campaign’s suggested amendments would serve to save the public purse and advance the common sense idea that the power of the government ought to be limited.

The state of Montana holds in trust the responsibility to care for our native wildlife including the only population of wild buffalo in our expansive state. This constitutional duty can and must be summoned by the legislature to reform and publicly account for wild buffalo management in Montana.

BFC encourages the committee to consider our suggested amendments to SB 342.

Daniel Brister, MS
Executive Director
Buffalo Field Campaign
PO Box 957
West Yellowstone MT 59758
Phone: (406) 646-0070
Fax: (406) 646-0071
Email: bfc@wildrockies.org



About Buffalo Field Campaign

Buffalo Field Campaign was founded in 1997 to protect the natural habitat of wild migratory buffalo and native wildlife, to stop the slaughter and harassment of America's last wild buffalo as well as to advocate for their lasting protection, and to work with people of all Nations to honor the sacredness of the wild buffalo.

Buffalo Field Campaign is located in West Yellowstone, Gallatin County, Montana, and is supported by volunteers and citizens in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, and by people from around the world who value America's native wildlife and the ecosystems upon which they depend, and enjoy the natural wonders of our irreplaceable public lands.

As an organization and on behalf of our members, Buffalo Field Campaign is deeply concerned and actively involved in protecting the last remaining descendants of indigenous buffalo in North America to occupy their original range.

Buffalo Field Campaign publicizes the plight of the buffalo, works to end their slaughter by government agencies, and advocates for the long-term protection of viable populations of wild buffalo and year-round habitat.

Buffalo Field Campaign actively engages the American public to honor and protect our cultural heritage by allowing wild buffalo to exist as an indigenous wildlife species fulfilling their ecological role on their native landscape.

Buffalo Field Campaign volunteers patrol habitat where buffalo migrate within the Yellowstone and Madison River drainages. These direct experiences with buffalo on their native habitats inform our actions and strengthen our commitment to gaining permanent protections for America's last wild buffalo.