



**BUFFALO FIELD CAMPAIGN**

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Chairman John Brenden and members of the Senate Fish and Game  
Committee, Montana Senate  
PO Box 200500  
Helena, MT 59620-0500

Mr. Chairman and members of the Senate Fish and Game committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on SB  
143. 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 a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to stop  
the slaughter of Yellowstone's wild buffalo herd, protect the natural  
habitat of wild free-roaming buffalo and native wildlife, 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 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 concerned and actively involved with protecting the last remaining  
descendants of indigenous buffalo in North America to occupy their  
original range, and securing long-term protection for viable populations  
of wild buffalo and year-round habitat.

Buffalo Field Campaign is adamantly opposed to SB 143, for many reasons.

SB 143 seeks to use the full police powers of the state to destroy all migratory buffalo with taxpayer money.

The last few buffalo remaining as wildlife need conservation and habitat and not their destruction as SB 143 would enshrine as law.

In Montana, bison's status is S2: "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)

While there has never been a documented case of brucellosis transmission from migratory buffalo to cattle, SB 143 makes it mandatory for the Dept. of Livestock to "immediately" destroy all buffalo migrating into Montana by firearms, and or subject them to hazing, capture, quarantine, and transport to slaughterhouses.

A Fiscal Note for SB 143 has determined that this great destruction of our wild buffalo will cost over \$500,000 for Montana taxpayers and hunters in just a few years.

SB 143 establishes a 3-tags per person buffalo hunt "statewide and at any time of the year" and repeals the prohibition on state officials directing hunters to the "actual physical locations" of buffalo to be killed.

A 'hunt' should not be an extermination program, and hunters should not be manipulated by Montana into being its executioners as SB 143 attempts to do.

SB 143 also kills Montana's statewide bison reintroduction plan (MCA 87-1-216) by prohibiting any bison from being translocated except to the National Bison Range in Moiese.

In poll after poll, the majority of Montanan's have made it clear that we

favor restoration of wild bison including 70% of 400 registered voters polled by Moore Information in 2011.

Montana's wild lands, wildlife including wild bison, recreation and open spaces are cherished by Montanans and draw millions of people who annually sustain a multi-billion dollar economy. Why would the Montana Legislature attack and destroy our wildlife heritage that makes living in Montana possible and desirable?

In May 2012, the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council urged the state of Montana to protect the buffalo in Yellowstone, to cease harassing the wild species on their calving grounds, and to recognize Treaty Obligations to American Indian Tribes to protect viable populations of migratory buffalo in their native habitat.

We encourage the committee to heed the call of the majority of Montanans and the Tribal Leaders to respect our buffalo.

We believe it is long over due for Montana to respect and live up to its trustee responsibilities for our buffalo, a valued native species. The Montana Legislature can and must learn to co-exist with this indigenous wildlife species as people have done in Gardiner Basin, Hebgen Basin and elsewhere.

SB 143 is not amendable. Thank you for taking action to protect migratory buffalo as a valued wildlife species by voting to defeat SB 143.

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