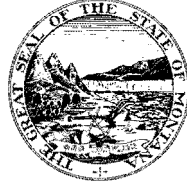


OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK
GOVERNOR



JOHN WALSH
LT. GOVERNOR

May 6, 2013

The Honorable Linda McCulloch
Secretary of State
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Secretary McCulloch:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 305 (SB 305), "AN ACT REVISING THE DEFINITION OF WILD BUFFALO AND WILD BISON; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 81-1-101, 87-2-101, AND 87-6-101, MCA."

SB 305 changes the definition of wild buffalo and wild bison to require that the animal "has never been owned," by a wide range of entities, "except for the state or a state agency." Current law is that a wild buffalo or wild bison "has not been reduced to captivity and is not owned by a person." Fish and wildlife in Montana are not actually "owned" by anyone, but are held by the state in trust for the benefit of the people of Montana. Under existing statutes the state is given broad management responsibilities for wild buffalo and wild bison, requiring the Departments of Livestock and the Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks to exercise authority over the animals, including disease control, hunting, and possible relocation both within and without the state.

To effectively manage wild buffalo and wild bison in Montana, the state needs to rely on various partners including the federal government and the tribal nations. SB 305 precludes any meaningful role for these entities and severely limits the ability of the state to meet its obligations to the public under the law.

For these reasons, I veto SB 305.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Bullock", written over a horizontal line.

STEVE BULLOCK
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Jeff Essmann, President of the Senate
Mark Blasdel, Speaker of the House