

HOUSE FISH AND GAME COMMITTEE

February 17, 1979

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Staigmilller at 11:30 a.m. with all members present except Representatives Curtiss and Jensen.

HOUSE BILL NO. 575

REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM DAY, Chief Sponsor, introduced the bill. He stated that this bill resulted from the Fish and Game Commission and Landowner/Sportsmen Relation Council, which he is a member. The relationships between the sportsmen and the landowner are not to good. We are addressing some of the problems the landowner has such as, the shooting of livestock and cutting of fences. There has been a lot of damage and hard feelings developing, as a result the landowner is forced to post his ground. HB 575 will establish a property damage reimbursement program within the Department of Fish and Game. By reimbursing the landowner he will open his land to hunting. This would result in an increased fee of \$2, when purchasing your conservation license.

In conclusion he urged the committee to support the bill as written.

PROPOSERS:

ALICE FRYSLIE, Montana Cattlemen's Association, stated that they supported this legislation basically, however, they would like to see Section 11, subsection 6, line 18, changed to read, "be used to compensate for wildlife game depredation." With these amendments they would be in full support.

KEN FITZPATRICK, Landowner/Sportsmen Advisory Council, stated that this bill had been drafted after several depredated areas had been evaluated. This bill will provide for reimbursement of damaged land. They felt that the landowners would open their lands to hunting if such a reimbursement program was available. This one piece of legislation will not take care of all the problems but it is a good start.

ROBERT F. WAMBACH, Director, Department of Fish and Game, stood in support of the bill. This bill addresses a very real problem that deserves immediate attention. The proposed solution contained in this bill comes from the Sportsmen/Landowner Advisory Council that has worked very closely and productively with him and the Department of Fish and Game for the past year and one-half. (complete testimony attached)

JOE KLABONDE, Chairman of the Fish and Game Commission, rose in support of the bill and stated that there were 13 members on the advisory council and four of these members are ranchers of the state. The commission took action on this bill and was in support of it. They hoped the committee would also be in support of HB 575.

MONS TEIGEN, representing the Montana Stockgrowers, Montana Woolgrowers, Montana Farm Bureau, Montana Farm Union, Montana NFO, and WIFE, rose in support with the attached amendments. These amendments would include the coverage of property damage resulting from game wildlife.

TED LUCAS, landowner, explained some of the problems he had encountered from damage caused by Whitetail deer in his haystacks. He had lost \$1,000 worth of hay to these animals, and it will cost \$900 to install a fence around these stacks. "I think that damage done by wildlife should be included."

BOB BIGGERSTAFF, Montana Association of State Grazing Districts and Montana Association of Conservation Districts, rose in support of the bill for both organizations. He also stated that they would support the amendments.

THOMAS U. DANIEL, Insurance Agent, stated that the members of the committee deserve commendation and he would hope that this committee and the House would put as much constructive thought into the bill as its' authors have. (complete testimony attached)

TONY SCHOANER, Trout Unlimited, rose in support of the bill and supported Tom Daniels remarks.

HUGH ZACKHEIM, Montana Wildlife Federation, rose in support for the 16 rod and gun clubs in Montana. He stated that the bill does have a sunset clause of 1983. We should give it a chance to work before including game depredation.

JOHN POSTON, Member of the Advisory Council and President of Ducks Unlimited, rose in support of the bill. They felt that this bill should be passed as is. They did not feel that crop damage should be included at this time. Amending the bill would ruin it. We have no idea if this will work with the \$2 charge, but we should give it a chance before adding game depredation. In 1983 we will have worked with it long enough to know if it is going to work. This bill is a good way to force contact with the farmers and ranchers relationships with the Fish and Game Field personnel.

Seeing no opponents Representative Day closed by stating he felt this bill would bring about more hunting on private land. He felt if the committee wanted to add game depredation to the bill they would also have to increase the fee to more than \$2.

Questions were asked by the committee and the hearing on HB 575 was closed.

REPRESENTATIVE DAN HARRINGTON, Chief Sponsor, introduced the bill. This resolution is urging the Department of Fish and Game to study the feasibility and practicality of introducing the White Amur or the Grass Carp into Georgetown Lake for purposes of weed control. Georgetown Lake is not an original lake therefore the algae is really overgrown and taking over the lake. These fish eat only algae and would help to cure the problem. You can not take a boat into the lake because the algae has grown so tall. Arkansas and Washington have used these fish and found them to work very well. They sometimes grow to be 100 pounds in weight. This would be a sport for the fisherman also.

PROPOSERS:

GEORGE BLAIM & MARGARET BLAIR, Homeowners on Georgetown Lake, stated that the weeds have taken over Georgetown Lake and causing its demise. A mechanical weed eating machine has been tried and proved a failure. For experimentation purposes we urge passage of this bill to have the Fish and Game obtain the Amur fish, and decide its feasibility to control weeds in Georgetown Lake.

The Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Company have offered to help with the expenses if we can find a way to get rid of the weeds.

The fish will cost \$1.50 each and they are 8 to 12 inches long. They will give you 75 to 100 fish to do research on without charge.

Questions were asked by the committee and the hearing on HJR 29 was closed.

HOUSE BILL NO. 623

REPRESENTATIVE PAUL KROPP, Chief Sponsor, introduced the bill. This bill will establish a trapper education program, to require evidence of completion of such course, a comparable course, or prior possession of a valid trapper's license before issuance of a Class C trapper's license.

PROPOSERS:

JANET MOORE, Montana Trapper's Association, stated the trapping was the first industry in this state. It has brought over 20 million dollars worth of revenue into the state each year. There are over 500 members in the trappers association. If we had a trapper education program it would be the best thing ever done.

EDD NENTWIG, Montana Trapper's Association, stated that they would like to have a trapper education program set up much like the hunter safety program is set up now. By educating the upcoming trappers we would better landowner/trapper relations. We would educate these trappers with the proper methods, tools, and humane aspects in fur harvest in Montana.

LESTER B. BARTON, Montana Trapper's Association, stated that the trapper education program that was set up in Washington has been very successful. We would train our young trappers to get permission from the landowners, how to get the right size traps, know your animal that you are trapping, how to set traps to keep from getting hurt, and how to take care of the fur to get the most out of it on the market.

They felt that a good trapper in each area would be glad to instruct the young trappers, keeping the cost at a minimum. They also felt that it should be administered through the Department of Fish and Game.

WILLIAM MOORE, Montana Trapper's Association, rose in support of the bill as written except, he would like to expand the training program to include fur-bearer habitat requirements and fur-bearer population dynamics.

BOB BIRD, Chief of the Bureau of Safety and Training for the Department of Fish and Game, stated that in recent years, the rise in value of long fur has caused a tremendous increase in trapping interest. (complete testimony attached)

REPRESENTATIVE KROPP closed urging the committee's favorable consideration.

Questions were asked by the committee and the hearing on HB 623 was closed.

HOUSE BILL NO. 767

REPRESENTATIVE EUGENE DONALDSON, Chief Sponsor, introduced the bill. This bill will provide for a preference for a landowner or lessee in the issuance of special elk permits during damage hunts. They must own or lease over 160 acres to qualify for the permits. He felt that it is their crops that are being damaged and if they are expected to open their land to other hunters to hunt they should also have that opportunity also.

PROPOSERS:

BILL BERBERET, Toston, Montana, stated that he felt that the landowner should have the privilege of hunting these elk during special damage hunts. The landowner has a responsibility to the game. They have had considerable trouble with the elk in their area and the department is very concerned.

GENE ALLEN, Department of Fish and Game, rose in support of the bill. The department is in general support of this bill, provided it is amended to include, "general season hunter access" as well as, "special season access." Without this amendment, they felt the landowner preference system described in the bill lends itself to manipulation in a way that would be unpopular with sportsmen and counter-productive to recent efforts to improve landowner/sportsmen relations. (amendments attached)

Minutes
February 17, 1979
Page 5

REPRESENTATIVE ORVAL ELLISON closed for Representative Donaldson by stating that this bill is an insentive to the landowners to open their land to hunting.

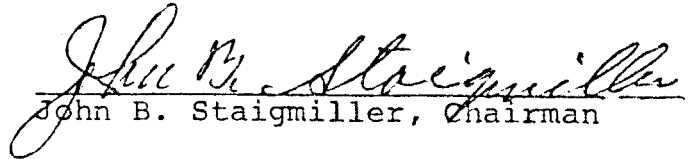
Questions were asked by the committee and the suggestion of adding deer to the bill was brought up.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

HOUSE BILL NO. 145

Representative Conroy moved, DO PASS. The motion was carried unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.


John B. Staigmiller, Chairman

Judy J. Mook, Secretary