# [***NEW BILL WOULD TAKE BISON MANAGEMENT AWAY FROM BIOLOGISTS AND HAND IT TO POLITICIANS***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5F91-SFC1-DYTH-G532-00000-00&context=1516831)

States News Service

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**Body**

The following information was ***released by Defenders of Wildlife***:

Wildlife conservation groups and ***tribes*** today expressed concern about a new bill in the state legislature that would hand control of state bison management to county politicians. The groups cite concerns that wildlife biologists would be replaced by politicians as the decision-makers for wild bison management and that the bill would create a patchwork of inconsistent laws that would wreak havoc on wild bison restoration in Montana.

The bill comes on the heels of a recent public opinion survey that shows 76 percent of Montanans support restoring bison populations on public lands. The poll also found that 74 percent of Montanans think decisions about bison should be made by biologists and wildlife officials rather than county politicians.

Steve Forrest, Defenders Senior Representative for Rockies and Plains issued the following statement:

"Seventy-six percent of Montanans want to see bison restored on public lands in Montana. This legislation would give local politicians the power to derail bison restoration, even on our public lands. As few as two county commissioners could veto the wishes of hundreds of thousands of Montanans.

"Wildlife decisions in Montana should be made by Montana's Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks, not by politicians with no wildlife expertise. We should have a consistent statewide approach to managing wild bison, just as we do for managing deer, elk and other wildlife - not 56 different county policies established by politicians who have their own local agendas."

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