



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Fiscal Note 2027 Biennium

Bill#/Title: **HB0176: Require unlimited wolf hunting quota when population is at or above 450 wolves**

Primary Sponsor: Shannon Maness Status: As Amended in House Committee

☐ Included in the Executive Budget ☐ Needs to be included in HB 2 ☐ Significant Local Gov Impact
☒ Significant Long-Term Impacts ☒ Technical Concerns ☐ Dedicated Revenue Form Attached

FISCAL SUMMARY

	<u>FY 2026 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2028 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2029 Difference</u>
Expenditures				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
Revenues				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
Net Impact	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
General Fund Balance				

Description of fiscal impact

Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

HB 176 as amended requires that, when population exceeds 450 but is less than 550, FWP and the commission shall apply different management techniques depending on the conditions in each administrative district. The most liberal harvest regulations must be applied in districts with the greatest number of wolves.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Assumptions

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP)

1. HB 176 as amended states that when the wolf population exceeds 450 but is less than 550, FWP and the commission shall apply different management techniques depending on the conditions in each administrative district. The most liberal harvest regulations must be applied in districts with the greatest number of wolves.
2. The department shall use the same modeling criteria for estimates made for subsequent years to ensure the data results are able to be interpreted consistently. The department may use new modeling techniques in conjunction with the iPOM to estimate the wolf population more accurately.
3. HB 176 does not change or distinguish between resident and nonresident hunters, so nonresidents could also take an unlimited number of wolves on a single license.
4. HB 176 changes the license permit of trapping wolves to unlimited, instead of a bag limit of 10 per one license in the current statute. FWP does not see a change in revenue for licensing regarding trapping of wolves.

5. Under HB 176, a hunter would only need to purchase one wolf license to take an unlimited number of wolves. Currently, a hunter must possess a wolf license for each wolf they plan to harvest with a limit of 10 wolves per hunter. This would result in a loss of license revenue as currently an average of 14.73% of wolf hunters purchase more than one wolf license each year. The department estimates the average loss of revenue from wolf licenses would be \$32,322 per year. FWP assumes the same number of hunters will apply and purchase these licenses in future years. The following table shows the total number of hunters purchasing wolf licenses from 2020-2024 with a 5-year average.

Residency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	5 -year average
Resident	160,974	17,797	15,487	15,207	15,488	16,015
Nonresident	2,433	3,041	2,364	2,544	2,673	2,611

6. The following table shows the total individual hunters with more than one license and the total lost revenue based on HB 176 (5-year average). (approximately 14.73% of hunters purchase a second wolf license).

Residency	# of Hunters purchasing additional license	License Cost	Total Lost Revenue per FY
Resident	2,156	\$ 12	\$ 25,872
Nonresident	129	\$ 50	\$ 6,450
Total	2,285		\$ 32,322

Fiscal Analysis Table

	<u>FY 2026 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2028 Difference</u>	<u>FY 2029 Difference</u>
<u>Fiscal Impact</u>				
<u>Expenditures</u>				
Operating Expenses	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Expenditures	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>
<u>Funding of Expenditures</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Funding of Expenditures	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>
<u>Revenues</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Revenues	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>	<u>(\$32,322)</u>
<u>Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures)</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

Significant Long-Term Impacts

1.FWP has current pending litigation concerning whether the Department and Commission's authorization to kill wolves outside of Yellowstone National Park violates the National Parks Organic Act. FWP is unsure how an unlimited quota to kill wolves across the state may affect this pending litigation.

Technical Concerns

1. When reviewing Paragraph (2)(i) and (iii), the statutory language contradicts itself. With respect to Paragraph (2)(i), it states that the commission shall authorize "more than one" wolf hunting license. On the other hand, Paragraph (2)(iii) states that the commission shall authorize "an unlimited number of wolves by the holder of a single wolf hunting or trapping license." Given that, it is unclear whether the commission must provide hunters/trappers with one license or more than one license.

NOT SIGNED BY SPONSOR

Sponsor's Initials

Date

1/31/25



Budget Director's Initials

1/30/2025

Date