



AN ACT REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS TO NOTIFY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, SHERIFF'S OFFICES, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS BEFORE THE RELEASE OF A LARGE PREDATOR; AND AMENDING SECTION 87-1-217, MCA.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 87-1-217, MCA, is amended to read:

"87-1-217. Policy for management of large predators -- legislative intent. (1) In managing large predators, the primary goals of the department, in the order of listed priority, are to:

(a) protect humans, livestock, and pets;

(b) preserve and enhance the safety of the public during outdoor recreational and livelihood activities; and

(c) preserve citizens' opportunities to hunt large game species.

(2) With regard to large predators, it is the intent of the legislature that the specific provisions of this section concerning the management of large predators will control the general supervisory authority of the department regarding the management of all wildlife.

(3) For the management of wolves in accordance with the priorities established in subsection (1), the department may use lethal action to take problem wolves that attack livestock if the state objective for breeding pairs has been met. For the purposes of this subsection, "problem wolves" means any individual wolf or pack of wolves with a history of livestock predation.

(4) The department shall work with the livestock loss board and the United States department of agriculture wildlife services to establish the conditions under which carcasses or parts of carcasses from wolves or mountain lions are retrieved during management activities and when those carcasses or parts of carcasses are made available to the livestock loss board for sale or auction pursuant to 2-15-3113.

(5) (a) The department shall ensure that county commissioners and tribal governments in areas that have identifiable populations of large predators have the opportunity for consultation and coordination with state and federal agencies prior to state and federal policy decisions involving large predators and large game species.

(b) The department shall provide verbal and written notice to the county commissioners, sheriff's office, and tribal government located within the county or tribal government boundaries where a large predator is to be relocated:

(i) on the finalization of an annual plan to relocate a large predator into a county or tribal government boundary other than the one it was captured in;

(ii) on the finalization of a change to a plan to relocate a large predator into a county or tribal government boundary other than the one it was captured in;

(iii) within 24 hours of the capture of a large predator if it will be relocated into a county or tribal government boundary other than the one it was captured in; and

(iv) within 24 hours of the relocation of a large predator if the relocation site has been previously approved by the commission for relocation of bears.

(6) As used in this section:

(a) "consultation" means to actively provide information to a county or tribal government regarding proposed policy decisions on matters that may have a harmful effect on agricultural production or livestock operations or that may pose a risk to human health or safety in that county or on those tribal lands and to seek information and advice from counties or tribal governments on these matters;

(b) "large game species" means deer, elk, mountain sheep, moose, antelope, and mountain goats;
and

(c) "large predators" means bears, mountain lions, and wolves."

Section 2. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a copy of [this act] to each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
HB 648, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

HOUSE BILL NO. 648

INTRODUCED BY B. LER, E. ALBUS, R. GREGG, C. COCHRAN, S. GIST, R. MINER, J. SCHILLINGER, N.
DURAM, Z. WIRTH, S. MANESS

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