

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 37

INTRODUCED BY W. WARBURTON

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS' RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATION WITH LANDOWNERS.

WHEREAS, two-thirds of the land in Montana is privately owned; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks estimates that 75% of antelope, 67% of white-tailed deer, 62% of mule deer, and 37% of elk in Montana are distributed on private land; and

WHEREAS, the size of Montana's elk herd has tripled over the past 30 years; and

WHEREAS, big game populations have grown and are projected to continue growing; and

WHEREAS, much of that growth necessitates additional wildlife tolerance by private property owners;

and

WHEREAS, private property owners in Montana welcome the aesthetic, recreational, and nostalgic value that wildlife brings to Montana; and

WHEREAS, big game hunting is an important segment of Montana's tourism industry and brings jobs and income to towns throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, restrictions on access to public land have placed more pressure on private property owners to provide hunting access; and

WHEREAS, the Department's survey data reveals that approximately 96% of private property owners provide public hunting access for deer and elk, 97% for antelope, and 95% for upland game birds; and

WHEREAS, the habits of hunters and the management practices of landowners are changing; and

WHEREAS, private landowners play the most important role in protecting Montana's wildlife resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the 62nd Legislature:

(1) recognizes that Montana's wildlife resources are becoming increasingly dependent on tolerance by private property owners; and



