



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA OPPOSING BISON INTRODUCTION AT THE CHARLES M. RUSSELL NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

WHEREAS, the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge (the CMR) spans nearly 1 million acres of land in Montana; and

WHEREAS, the CMR incorporates land from six Montana counties, including Fergus, Phillips, Petroleum, Garfield, Valley, and McCone Counties; and

WHEREAS, the CMR is surrounded by a combination of private property, federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, and state trust land managed by the State of Montana; and

WHEREAS, 5% of the land within the CMR is private inholdings, with the remainder comprised of the Fort Peck Reservoir and a checkerboard of state trust land and federally owned land; and

WHEREAS, the federal land adjacent to the CMR is managed for multiple uses; and

WHEREAS, the federal and state trust land within the boundaries of the CMR are open range and fenced in common in such a way that there is no delineation between where federal land ends and state trust land begins; and

WHEREAS, the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service have identified the CMR as a potential location to introduce bison; and

WHEREAS, the State of Montana has supremacy over wildlife management in its jurisdiction, and a unilateral bison introduction by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service would violate the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, the State of Montana has a fiduciary duty to hold state trust land in trust for the people of Montana, and to manage that land for the purposes for which it has been granted, donated, or devised; and

WHEREAS, the placement of bison on the CMR would jeopardize critical grazing land for livestock, greatly increase the threat of disease transmission between livestock and wildlife, threaten the livelihoods of ranching families, and impair the State of Montana's management of state trust land; and

WHEREAS, the State of Montana and other landowners in and neighboring the CMR would be forced to bear the cost of damages caused by bison.

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

- (1) That the State of Montana opposes the introduction of any bison on the CMR.
- (2) That the State of Montana has a vested interest in ensuring the continued physical and economic health of our agriculture industry through acting to eliminate disease and promote the industry.
- (3) That the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the United States Congress, the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Fish & Wildlife Service.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SJ 14, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2023.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2023.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

INTRODUCED BY M. LANG, M. CUFFE, T. MCGILLVRAY, S. HINEBAUCH, D. LOGE, D. BARTEL, C.
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