MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION
AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 28, 2021

Agenda Item: Deer Adaptive Harvest Management Plan Update

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Minutes

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Background: Montana's Adaptive Harvest Management (AHM) Plan was adopted in 2001 and serves as a primary guide for recommending regulations for mule deer hunting seasons. The plan remains effective for developing recommendations for mule deer, yet several changes in approaches should be addressed in an update to the plan. The department has addressed updates in five major areas:

- Changing the definition of long-term average as a metric for monitoring mule deer,
- Changing how population triggers are used to move from one mule deer hunting regulation package to another,
- Formally encouraging the alignment of hunting regulations among adjacent hunting districts,
- Removing predictive population modelling as one of the four major components of AHM, though work on this aspect remains a priority for research and development, and
- Updating correlations between this AHM document and chronic wasting disease management.

Public Involvement Process and Results: The department presented an overview of the process that has been in use during the commission work session on July 27 with an informational presentation that was available to the public. The department presented this at the commission meeting on August 20, 2021, and has considered public comment received through September 20, 2021 in this final draft.

Alternatives and Analysis: The department used an internal team to evaluate and update the plan with current biological information from scientific literature and agency experience.

Agency Rationale and Recommendation: This updated plan provides a data-based approach to developing mule deer hunting recommendations. Nothing in this approach is prescriptive.

Proposed Motion:
I move that the commission vote to adopt the revised Adaptive Harvest Management Plan.