

Wickman, Erik

From: wesley hogue <wes.hogue@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:42 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Sheep Amendment

To Whom it May Concern,

I apologize in advance as this has been a very busy week and I have limited time to write this but I do feel that it is important.

An amendment to the bighorn sheep unlimited tags was just recently proposed. The intent of the proposal was to account for the increased number of unlimited sheep hunters. Although the number of unlimited tag holders did spike after COVID in 2020 and 2021, the numbers have been slowly reducing year over year back to their normal levels. To my knowledge and discussions with biologists, the increased hunting pressure has also not affected the Sheep herds in any measurable way.

The rationale to allow unlimited hunters to keep their sheep bonus points is the vast majority of unlimited hunters never fill the tag. For most people it is a fun way to get out and attempt to hunt sheep while they wait to draw a limited entry tag. To consider this unfair, when any hunter who wants to hunt the unlimited units can, is an odd rationale.

When looking at historical success, I do agree that closing the season on a 24hr notice would fix the vast majority of the units that fill over the quota. This seems to be the only part of the amendment that could help sheep herds.

Thank you,
Wesley Hogue

Wickman, Erik

From: Randy Tuhy <rstuhy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 10:30 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pat Tabor amendment

RE: Former response

Typo on year of area 500 and 502 sheep kills should read 2022 instead of 2023

Thanks Randy Tuhy

Wickman, Erik

From: Gayle Kamps <gaylekamps@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 9:41 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unlimited sheep amendment

I see no reason to change the current unlimited sheep regulations. It provides a way for people to hunt sheep- especially the older generation.

I wouldn't be opposed to changing the 48 hour check in time to 24 hours.

Thank you for your consideration.

George Kamps
2560 E. River Rd.
Livingston. MT
59047

Wickman, Erik

From: Randy Tuhy <rstuhy@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 9:31 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pat Tabor sheep amendment

First of all I am wondering why a commissioner from region one is proposing anything from a region he is not in. (Maybe your fellow outfitters are asking for these changes. Being an outfitters AND on the Game and Fish Commission sounds a lot like a conflict of interest to me. Also maybe you should get all your ducks in a row on a given subject if you are going to propose ANY changes to the Game and Fish .1. Does the commission have the power to make the proposed change? 2. Make sure all your facts are true.(2023 area 500 NO Sheep kills. Area 502 one sheep kill. Both under quota.) 3. Have you talked to the Biologists from the effected region?

Concerned Outdoorsman
Randy Tuhy

Wickman, Erik

From: Steve Kamps <12kamps@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 8:44 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unlimited Sheep Tags Should NOT Become Limited

Please don't take opportunity away from those of us who give up our chance at one of the premiere sheep tags and instead choose to hunt hard for smaller sheep. The unlimited sheep tags are all about opportunity. Limiting that opportunity to every other year is totally unnecessary and unheard of here in Montana. Is this even legal? If FWP has a problem getting the season shut down quickly enough, then fix that problem, but don't limit the opportunity. It then becomes a limited sheep tag which is completely opposite of the intent of these unlimited tags and this unique opportunity.

Did you know that last year in HD303 an extra ram got shot because FWP closed the season on one of the two notification systems (online, phone line) and not the other one. Big oops. People kept hunting because one of the systems said the season was still open and a ram got shot after the deadline and after other people had stopped hunting because the other system they checked said it was closed. The moral of the story is fix the problems internally, but don't limit our opportunity because you think it might perhaps, maybe, possibly have a minute chance of helping something in the future.

Oh, and on top of that you would take away our bonus points too. It seems like we're trying to hit a small group of people awfully hard all at once. Did we do something wrong because we choose to hunt sheep the hard way? Actually according to this proposal we could only hunt sheep the hard way with extremely low odds of success on smaller sheep every other year because...? No other unlimited tags are this way in Montana. Let's not set a really bad precedent of limiting opportunity with unlimited tags for Montanans when it's not necessary and it won't fix any of the perceived problems. If we change these unlimited tags to every other year then which unlimited tags are next, maybe mountain lion? And which one after that? Its a downward spiral and Montanan's lose when we can no longer hunt every year just like some of those other states where people can't hunt and enjoy in their own state any more. Think about that, bleak right?

The Unlimited Sheep tags Montana has are a crown jewel of opportunity in just the right places in just the right ways. And it's been working for years. We'd sure like to keep it that way rather than mess it all up.

Steve Kamps
Unlimited Sheep Hunter (as in without limit to every other year = unlimited)

Wickman, Erik

From: Gary Van Haele <gary.vanhaele@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 4:56 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commissioner Taber amendment 3 I believe one day public comment Time is totally unacceptable. This proposed amendment was not released to the public in a timely fashion I believe this amendment is totally unnecessary it will have no meaningf...

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Gary Van Haele <gary.vanhaele@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 4:18 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commissioner Tabor 3 (pdf) I Gary Van Haele believe that this Proposed amendment is unnecessary and it also penalize the block management cooperators for allowing hunting on their property. This amendment would take private property ri...

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Ridley Griggs <ridleygriggs43@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 10:48 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment on Proposed Unlimited Sheep Amendments

Dear Fish and Wildlife Commission:

I'm reaching out to provide comments on Vice Chair Tabor's proposed unlimited sheep amendments. I'm a nonresident who plans to purchase an unlimited license each year. I can understand the concerns brought forth in Vice Chair Tabor's proposal. However, I would ask the Commission to please explore solutions that do not limit hunters to every other year.

If occasional quota overruns are harmful to the sheep herds (I don't know whether that's the case - I assume the biologists do), I think there are other ways to address that, such as shortened reporting periods and closure notices. I don't think a 24 hour closure window or reporting period is unreasonable with today's technology, especially if proxy reporting was allowed for the initial report. Or, if there was a way to send a text message report with a Garmin InReach or similar device, the report could be made minutes after harvest.

I'm personally not bothered by the higher hunter numbers in recent years. I see it as a positive - more people out and enjoying the mountains, contributing to sheep conservation. There's plenty of room for everyone. Recognizing the increasing demand, though, I hope we can think of creative ways to expand unlimited sheep hunting opportunity accordingly. I think District 305 would be a great place to start. I also think there may be room in certain instances to increase quotas.

I support requiring forfeiture of sheep points in exchange for an unlimited license. It seems like a fair approach.

I spent more than \$1,300 on my sheep license, hunting license, and application fees this year, and I'm planning to do it again. That's crazy money to spend on an unlimited sheep license with a less than 2% chance of success, but I'll do it if it preserves the opportunity and supports an agency that's done so much for sheep, and provided unparalleled sheep hunting opportunity for the common man. Please work to increase unlimited sheep hunting opportunity, not limit it! It will be better for the FWP and for the sheep if they get to take my money every single year!

Thank you for your good work on behalf of Montana's wildlife.

Respectfully yours,

Ridley Griggs
801-809-7921

Wickman, Erik

From: Danny MacKay <danm_40@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 7:55 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Private land only doe tags

I support private land only mule deer doe hunting in region 7.
Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Art Hayes <antlerradar@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 7:37 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: doe hunting

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Art Hayes <antlerradar@yahoo.com>
To: Susan Hayes <antlerradar@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 at 06:37:03 PM MST
Subject: doe hunting

Commissioners

I am writing in strong support of making doe tags in region 7 good only on private land. I have hunted in region 7 since the late 70's and the low deer numbers on public land during hunting season is very concerning to me. The low numbers now are different than in the past. I can remember the bad winters in 78/79 and 96/97 and the drought of 88. Deer numbers suffered during those years, but they recovered on both public and private land. The winter of 2012 was also a tough one. This time deer numbers recovered on private land, but never made much of a recovery on public land and with the recent droughts public land deer numbers have suffered even more. I believe the reason for this is once the recovery on the more productive private river and creek bottom land was well underway we were back to issuing 11,000 doe tags. The problem is the recovery on the less productive public land is slower and just getting started. The public land herd never had a chance to recover.

When I first started hunting mule deer lived in the hills and whitetails were on the river bottoms. I have seen the shift in the mule deer herd from the mostly public land hills to the mostly private land river and creek bottoms. Now there are just as many mule deer on the river bottom as there are whitetails and many places on public are almost void of deer during hunting season. On our ranch deer start to trickle down out of the hills in September. Once rifle season starts that trickle becomes a flood. Not long into rifle season there are hundreds of mule deer on our property and a few miles to the east on the Custer National Forest you are hard pressed to find a handful. Once the season ends the mule deer start to move back into the hills and by mid December only a handful remain on our meadows. Not far from me there is a state section with a county road running right through the middle. It is hunted hard, someone is hunting there every day of the season, on weekends it is not uncommon to see four or five cars parked along the road. In the past deer would leave the meadows and bed down in the juniper on the state land. Now by the end of the first week of the season deer will not leave the field. They would rather bed down exposed to the elements than risk going to the state section. When I first started hunting almost no one hunted the archery season for deer and once you filled your deer A tag you were hunting birds the rest of the fall. Now the archery elk season is almost as busy as rifle season and there are 799 rifle elk tags, general elk licenses good for a cow or spike outside of the forest, cow tags for the forest, elk B tags, 11,000 mule deer doe tags and whitetail doe tags. It all adds up to a lot more hunting pressure on public land. Is it any wonder deer leave public land during the fall? We need to be looking for ways to keep deer from leaving public land and to expand the deer herd that does not leave. Making doe tags only good on private land will not solve all the hunting pressure issues on public land, but it will be a big step in the right direction.

I am not against doe hunting. We have mule deer doe hunters on the ranch every year. On years like the most recent ones when deer numbers are low it may only be a handful, on years when deer numbers are high we will have more. I can remember one year when hunters took over 50 does from the ranch and we would have taken more if we could have found the hunters. It is not that easy to find fifty doe hunters. When given the option to try to fill the tag on public or ask for permission on private land most hunters will choose to hunt the public almost every time. Several of the fifty hunters only came to us after they failed to fill their tags on public land. Others felt like it would be a waste of their time if they could not also shoot a buck. The problem with the doe tags in region 7 is not the number of tags, but the distribution of where the tags are filled. The vast majority of the tags need to be filled where the deer numbers are concentrated or causing crop damage. This means private land. Killing does on sparsely populated public land will do little to mitigate crop damage or disperse highly concentrated herds where diseases like CWD are most likely to spread. Hunters can not be counted on to distribute themselves. I know it can sometimes be difficult to gain access to private land, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't try. Doe tags only good on private land would require sportsman to try. I think it would be a good thing for

landowner/sportsman relations in the end. As a landowner I am much more open to a hunter that is just trying to fill the freezer than someone who is looking to shoot the biggest buck on the ranch. This is how relationships get started and we need more and better landowner/sportsman relations in Montana.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Arthur F. Hayes III

Wickman, Erik

From: Bill Wood <bill@treedupoutfitters.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 7:00 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support proposed changes to elk, mule deer, ram and black bear season

Dear Online Comments Commission,

I am writing to urge your support for the following proposals related to elk, mule deer, ram and black bear hunting seasons.

SUPPORT: Increase either-sex elk quotas for license permit type (LPT) 700-20 from 200 to 250, and in LPT 700-21 from 660 to 800. Since the February 2022, decrease in quotas, the removal of 168 resident hunters and 19 nonresidents hunters has limited sustainable public hunting opportunities and cost local businesses in the 700 Hunting District an estimated \$220,000 in hunting-related tourism dollars. I support the increase in this amendment and urge the Commission to vote in support.

SUPPORT: Set a statewide spring black bear hunting season closure for June 15 and expand Region 1 pilot project. which establishes a policy of voluntary tooth extraction by hunters. A standard spring season statewide closing date of June 15 will simplify regulations, provide accommodation for variable spring weather events, and afford sustainable hunting opportunities.

SUPPORT: Amendment to set the black bear season in bear management unit 520 from May 1 to June 15. A start date of the season of May 1 will allow the season to stay open incrementally longer and, hopefully, allow hunters to access more back country male bears that are unreachable due to snow in the early season. We also recommend the department implement bear ID training so hunters can identify sows to prevent the female harvest from closing the season early.

SUPPORT: Amendment to reestablish the historic boundary for HD 417, switching the northwestern boundary back to its original location of the Stafford Ferry Road.

SUPPORT: Establish rules that limit the hunting and harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land," and that on all public lands and those lands enrolled in Block Management in Region 7 be closed to the taking of antlerless mule deer.

SUPPORT: Amendment to allow a quota of one ram in HD 250 during the archery season and general season.

SUPPORT: Amendment to remove the proposal to adjust the HD boundary between 339 and 421. It proposes to keep the current boundary as is.

Sincerely,

Bill Wood
99 Wisconsin Creek Rd W
Sheridan, MT 59749
bill@treedupoutfitters.com

Wickman, Erik

From: John Whitmus <jewhitmus@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 4:36 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pat Tabor's Sheep Amendment

To whom it may concern,

For the love of god Leave it alone!! Why do you people have to try and change things. What's wrong with the way it is?? Just leave it alone there is very limited number of sheep hunters in Montana so why mess with the process!! I have been hunting in Montana for 38 years and haven't drawn a sheep tag ever so it's nice to have the unlimited area's that I can get a tag and go if I have chance. Like this year 2023 I wasn't able to get down there to hunt so Mt. FWP got my \$125 which is ok with me but now you guys want to only let us get a tag every other year well that just sucks because next year I will have more time to hunt sheep or not be able to hunt who knows what the future will bring. So what's gonna happen is the unlimited guys will tell you to go fly a kite to put it nicely and put in the draw only. So it kinda shoots the idea of the unlimited area's in the butt. This is just my opinion from an old Montana hunter that loves this state the way it is.

Thanks for your time.
John Whitmus

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Bridger Kamps <bridgerk19@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 9:30 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unlimited Sheep Tag

I do not think that the unlimited sheet tag should be reduced to every other year. It limits opportunity for people, like my grandfather who only has so many years left to hunt. People like him should not be forced to have their hunting cut in half.

Wickman, Erik

From: Riley Pearson <riley.pearson09@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 7:26 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed changes in bighorn sheep unlimited units

Commissioners,

Commissioner Tabor has recently proposed a couple of changes to the unlimiteds. I will focus on the one about how often someone can hunt, as FWP has already stated in their response that his proposal regarding useage of bonus points will need to be made legislatively, as that is covered by the Montana code annotated and inside of commission's authority.

I have around 200 days in the unlimiteds scouting and hunting for myself and with my friends. I have seen a few other hunters, mostly on the trails within a few miles of the trailhead, but for the most part there is not a crowding issue in the vast majority of the hunting districts. I accompanied a successful hunter this past year. We saw zero other hunters in 9 days. The issue of crowding is one more of perception than reality. A look at long term license sales show relatively flat hunter numbers, as well.

There are things that can be done to improve the unlimiteds and the MT WSF has formed a conservation committee that has two passionate long time unlimited hunters on it. I know first hand that they have some great ideas they plan to speak to FWP about. I would urge you to give this grassroots effort a chance. The ideas that come out of it will be from those with the closest ties to the units and whom value it the most.

In my view, the two biggest issues that could be improved by FWP are the enforcement of laws and the harvest/quota system.

In the last 3 years, 2 rams that do not meet the 3/4 curl definition in the regulations have been killed in 303 and plugged by FWP employees. These are rams that are not legal and should have been confiscated and the hunter cited. For an unlimited opportunity as rare and special as this to work in the long term, there must be consistent enforcement of the laws that we all play by.

The harvest reporting needs improvement. Mr. Tabor's proposal mentions how the system can be gamed by hunters, but FWP is not doing their part. On several occasions, FWP has not updated the quota status hotline and website on the day they should, allowing the season to run longer than 48 hours. This happened this year in 501 and in 500 in 2019. I believe it has happened other times. I just know about these two instances for sure because I was involved in the hunt of the rams that closed the seasons.

The 48 reporting requirement and the closure window could be shortened. This regulation has been in place since the time of land line telephones. Today, most everybody has a satellite communication device that allows texting or calling from anywhere.

Lastly, to alleviate pressure, the creation of additional unlimited units would spread hunters out. I know there are several places suitable for this and discussions for this are taking place. I hope that if it is formally brought to you, that the commission will support their creation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my thoughts and for looking after the most special hunting opportunity in the world.

Riley Pearson

Wickman, Erik

From: Peter Guynn <peter.guynn51@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 7:26 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] My comments to the "Tabor Amendments"

Dear FWP Commission,

I assume these amendments were those added after the Aug 17 meeting as I remember it but not specifically so I beg to be forgiven for not being quite specific.

Yes I am sure that you want to destroy even more predators than agreed, or you want welfare ranchers to shoot grizzlies threatening livestock on Public lands as also agreed not to.

The FWP board of commissioners is composed of nothing but livestock interests, hunting and trapping groups not the "household" public or the majority who love only to watch and enjoy wildlife.

And the Region 1 commissioner owns part of a hunting business in Region1 and got the system changed to the quota system so even more hunters and out of staters are out there making money. What else can one say about the Montana FWP other than no more Salmon in Flathead lake and soon to be no more Grizzlies and Wolves?

So I live in Region 1: no more Wolf sightings or howls at night. no Fischers, much less wildlife than ever before since the introduction of the inhumane use of snares, traps and the QUOTA system since 2021, What more do I need to say why kill/quota ratios are going down on predators or the ungulates as well? Your own graphs show a sustainable pattern prior to 2021, but not now,

Over 50 wolves REPORTED killed in Region 1 & 2 to date. How many more hunters has it taken to get to that? And the trapping has not even really begun, And no, the wolves are not outsmarting the hunters.

And hunters be aware of strange bedfellows in the FWP called the Livestock Industry, They will have the best outcome after all is said and done, Cows could replace after most of the game which you covet is gone, much as at the turn of the 19 and early 20th Century after the "US Biological Survey" finished its work in the West. Yes it is true.

I have to predicate my opinion here, otherwise what is the point of begging you to reduce these quotas and this senseless killing without it? How can a minority take so much away from so many?

Thank you so much for passing on this opportunity to comment even in such short notice.

Peter Guynn
1868 Buerger Rd
Condon Mt

Wickman, Erik

From: russ61hi@yahoo.com
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 5:39 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] December 14th Meeting

Regarding Tabor's antlerless mule deer amendment:

I absolutely DO NOT support this amendment in any way, shape, or form. Tabor is not the region 7 commissioner; he should keep to his region. I work in an office in Glendive with about 100 people. 50 of us hunt, no one, absolutely no one agrees with this. The only people that show up to the FWP bi-annual meetings complaining about the mule deer population or quality are the outfitters. Montana wildlife management is opportunity based and should remain so. You'll get a big deer if you put in the work.

California doesn't allow doe hunting. Guess what, the deer hunting there is shit. Don't copy a system that is proven not to work.

Does no one remember 2014? I do. Mule deer numbers were down, so the WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS recommended no mule deer doe tags that year. That was implemented, and 2 years later at the bi-annual meetings mule deer numbers were up 40% over historical averages, and the wildlife managers said this would be remembered as the good old days. Don't let one bad winter upend sound management practices.

Let the WILDLIFE BIOLOGISTS make the decisions, not some outfitter hoping to enrich his buddies.

Wickman, Erik

From: Cameron Kirkwood <14ckirkwood@gmasil.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 5:08 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Tabors AMENDMENT FOR BIGHORN SHEEP

Dear Online Comments Commission,

I am urging the commission to support Tabors amendment on unlimited sheep hunting. Montana's unlimited units are a jewel for our state. Currently we are seeing participation in our Unlimited Units that are double, and triple historic averages. In the last thirty years, we have lost 4 unlimited units to over harvest. When Montana FWP brings those units back online, they historically do not bring them back as an unlimited unit, but as a draw area. 301, 304, 305, 302, and 503, were once all unlimited areas. Now they have been brought back as draw areas, with 305, an area with a dozen rams old enough to vote being proposed as a 1 ram draw versus a 1 ram unlimited area this year. The history is very clear, once we lose an unlimited, we do not get it back!..

Currently hunters are able to game the system, and draw an unlimited tag, maintain their bonus points, and even apply for a point after the drawing. This has led to a very significant increase in unlimited participation, and as of last year, 2023, an over quota harvest in every unit except for 300. Hunters are able to contribute to point creep, and participate in the unlimited at a level higher than we have ever seen. Historically this was not the case. Historically hunters who drew an unlimited over the counter draw tag forfeited their points, and could not apply for a bonus point. This made hunters choose between hunting the unlimited or applying for Montanas Marquis sheep areas. Currently hunters get the best of both worlds, contributing to point creep, and participating in an unlimited sheep hunt. I would urge the commission to support Commissioner Tabors proposal in its entirety,, force hunters to chose between acquiring points for a marquis unit, or hunting one of Montana's Jewels, an unlimited sheep unit. Creating a one year waiting period for hunters who draw an unlimited tag, in order to reduce participation back to historic levels, and not allow hunters who draw a tag, even it is an unlimited tag, to apply for a bonus point of that species. Furthermore, Hunters should not be allowed to apply for bonus points the year they hold the tag, or the years they are in a waiting period after receiving a tag.

SUPPORT COMISSIONER TABORS PROPOSED AMENDMENT ON BIGHORN SHEEP IN ITS ENTIRETY

Sincerely,

Cameron Kirkwood
22 Whitehorse Rd
Townsend, MT 59644
14ckirkwood@gmasil.com

Wickman, Erik

From: Jeff Lukas <jeff@mtwf.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 4:04 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MWF Commissioner Amendment comments for Season Setting regs
Attachments: Montana Wildlife Federation's Commissioner's amendment comments.pdf

Hello,

Montana Wildlife Federation would like to thank FWP and the Commissioners for providing these amendments and the ability to comment on them. As the oldest conservation organization in the state, we appreciate the ability to help with the management of the Public Trust where we can. Attached are our comments on Commissioner amendments whose deadline is December 7th.

Thank you,

Jeff Lukas
Conservation Director, MWF
(406) 546-8406
jeff@mtwf.org

Wickman, Erik

From: Guy Stickney <wallguy31@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 3:09 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tabor Amendments

Hello Commission,
My comments regarding the amendments proposed by Commissioner Tabor are as follows:

Amendment 1: I oppose the amendment to increase the quotas in Hunting District 700. As I stated in my comments to Commissioner Cebull's amendment, it has been my personal observation that the quantity and quality of bull elk in this unit have been trending down for decades. This is corroborated by the departments data. Please follow the department staff recommendations for the quotas in this unit.

Amendment 2: I would recommend following the departments response to this amendment and that the hunting district boundaries return to the historic boundaries for 417 and 426 prior to 2021.

Amendment 3: I strongly support the amendment to move to private land only mule deer doe tags in Region 7. I applaud Commissioner Tabor for proposing this amendment. I have lived in Region 7 most of my life and I have never seen overall deer numbers this low on public lands. Only approximately 30% of lands in Region 7 are public lands yet they bare the majority of the hunting pressure in Region 7. The region 7 staff continues to insist nothing has changed in regards to mule deer even though life long residents such as myself have seen drastic changes to the overall numbers of mule deer and quality of mule deer bucks in the long term. We continue to implore them to step in and stick up for the resource. The FWP staff in region 7 are simply not doing their jobs when it comes to being stewards of the resource regarding mule deer in Region 7. Thats why I applaud you for bringing forth this amendment. Further changes are needed but this is a start. The only thing I would like to see changed is the private lands enrolled in Block management should not be included. Landowners in Block management like any private landowner can already choose what is harvested from their lands if they so choose. I believe that should continue to be their choice as with any private lands.

Amendment 4: I oppose this amendment. The Unlimited sheep districts is a very successful and unique bighorn sheep hunting opportunity not offered anywhere else in the world. Changes to this hunt should be very carefully considered and not changed without serious thought and buy in from the department. The department deserves a lot of credit for making this opportunity viable, wildly successful, and building well managed populations. However, lately the department has done a poor job of implementing the closures expediently and enforcing 3/4 curl requirements. Several questionable rams have been deemed legal and plugged. As well as the overharvest alluded to could have been minimized with timely closures by staff. Before making changes the department needs to enforce the existing rules. I do believe that with technology shorter reporting and season closure timeframes should be explored. Additionally if crowding becomes an issue the first change should be to take a look at NR caps. This needs to be thoughtful however as the money brought in for the resource is significant and only the quality of the hunt is affected by crowding not the resource.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Guy Stickney
Miles City, Montana

Wickman, Erik

From: Bill Oxendahl <billoxendahl@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 2:58 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposal

Dear Sirs,

In regards to Mr Tabor's unlimited sheep hunting proposal, myself and many others in my circle are in favor of Mr Tabor's idea of not allowing bonus points while holding an unlimited tag. It just seems like common sense. You either do one, or the other.

In regards to limiting tag opportunities every other year in the unlimited's, we strongly oppose that.

The 7 year wait is an enormous limiting factor in itself, and in the long game, we are confident it will work without additional limitations.

Thank-you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Oxendahl

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Ty Stubblefield <ty@montanawsf.org>
Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 12:45 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] MTWSF Comments on Montana Unlimited Bighorn Proposals
Attachments: MTWSF Response to Big Horn Sheep Proposal 12.2023.docx-2.pdf

Dear FW Commission,

Please accept our letter of comment for the proposed changes to the unlimited bighorn sheep hunts.

Thank you,

--
Ty Stubblefield
Executive Director
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
montanawsf.org [montanawsf.org]
406-696-3003



Wickman, Erik

From: Chris Francis <cjf@c-francis.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:15 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support proposed changes to elk, mule deer, ram and black bear season

Dear Online Comments Commission,

I am writing to urge your support for the following proposals related to elk, mule deer, ram and black bear hunting seasons.

SUPPORT: Increase either-sex elk quotas for license permit type (LPT) 700-20 from 200 to 250, and in LPT 700-21 from 660 to 800. Since the February 2022, decrease in quotas, the removal of 168 resident hunters and 19 nonresidents hunters has limited sustainable public hunting opportunities and cost local businesses in the 700 Hunting District an estimated \$220,000 in hunting-related tourism dollars. I support the increase in this amendment and urge the Commission to vote in support.

SUPPORT: Set a statewide spring black bear hunting season closure for June 15 and expand Region 1 pilot project. which establishes a policy of voluntary tooth extraction by hunters. A standard spring season statewide closing date of June 15 will simplify regulations, provide accommodation for variable spring weather events, and afford sustainable hunting opportunities.

SUPPORT: Amendment to set the black bear season in bear management unit 520 from May 1 to June 15. A start date of the season of May 1 will allow the season to stay open incrementally longer and, hopefully, allow hunters to access more back country male bears that are unreachable due to snow in the early season. We also recommend the department implement bear ID training so hunters can identify sows to prevent the female harvest from closing the season early.

SUPPORT: Amendment to reestablish the historic boundary for HD 417, switching the northwestern boundary back to its original location of the Stafford Ferry Road.

SUPPORT: Establish rules that limit the hunting and harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land," and that on all public lands and those lands enrolled in Block Management in Region 7 be closed to the taking of antlerless mule deer.

SUPPORT: Amendment to allow a quota of one ram in HD 250 during the archery season and general season.

SUPPORT: Amendment to remove the proposal to adjust the HD boundary between 339 and 421. It proposes to keep the current boundary as is.

Sincerely,

Chris Francis
PO Box 15
Gallatin Gateway, MT 59730
cjf@c-francis.com

Wickman, Erik

From: Jake Ahmann <jake.ahmann@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:06 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn Sheep- Unlimited Sheep Proposed Amendment

I oppose Pat Tabor's proposals to restrict hunters to hunting in the Unlimited Sheep districts (300, 303, 500, 501, and 502) to an every other year type hunt. This would not alleviate pressure, as hunters would simply go with their acquaintances in their off years, and we would see "Utah" style hunting parties of several people for one animal. It would also severely hinder the relationships our Biologists, namely Shawn Stewart, Justin Paugh, and Julie Cunningham, have developed with those that hunt year in and year out and provide valuable information for various game and non-game species that reside in these hunt districts. Due to these relationships, we now have the HD521 mountain goat hunt, and are responsible for the vast majority of verified wolverine sightings in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

As to the bonus point "loop-hole", I agree with the Department's response of simply making the hunt an "unlimited draw" only, as we do with Elk permits and deer permits, or making it a point of sale purchase only, where one would not be able to build points concurrently. I will say that the vast majority of those that do build bonus points while participating in the Unlimited hunts do so out of fear that the hunts will become a political target and be eliminated despite Department and biological recommendations. I would advise that the Commission consider their words and actions and the perception that we as sportsmen take them for as a means of tamping the desire of those to build points concurrently.

If Mr. Tabor would like to propose a shortened reporting window for successful sheep hunters, I would imagine the majority of the hunters I know would support this. We would also support the "Legal Ram" requirements being enforced to a higher standard than we have seen, specifically out of 303, in recent years. With social media, photos of these sub-legal rams circulate very quickly and erode trust in the department as far as enforcement goes.

Respectfully,
Jake Ahmann.

Wickman, Erik

From: Stephanie Prater <mthuntress406@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 12:18 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support Tabor's amendment #3- mule deer b tags private only

Members of the Commission,

I am writing to express my support for Vice Chair Tabor's Amendment #3 to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer to "valid only on private land". Excessive public land hunting pressure is one of the biggest issues in Montana, and I believe our current liberal OTC B-tag structure is largely to blame. I would love to see this applied to elk b tags as well. Public land elk b tags be draw-only and OTC for private land only elk b tags especially in region 4 & 5. I strongly believe this will help curb some of the pressure on public land.

Thank you,

Stephanie Prater

Lewistown, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Ian Wargo <IWargo@rpa-kal.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 10:47 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] December 14 Commission Meeting: Vice Chair Tabor Amendment #3 & #4

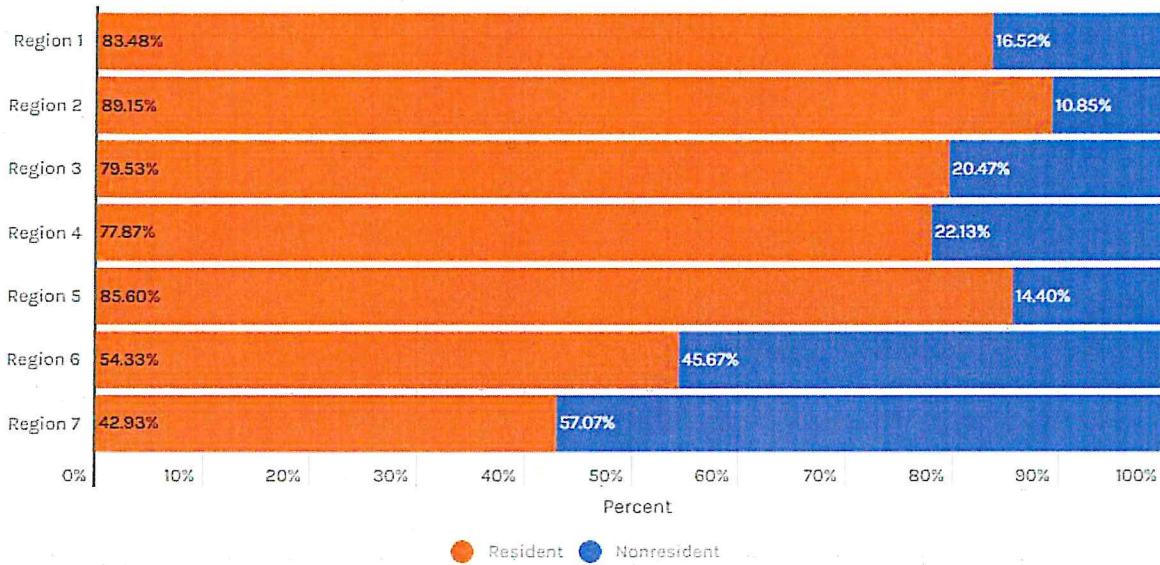
Members of the Commission,

I am writing to express my support for Vice Chair Tabor's Amendment #3 to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer to "valid only on private land". Excessive public land hunting pressure has become one of, if not the largest issues in Montana, and I would make the claim that our current B-tag structure is largely to blame. As game populations rise and fall B-tags are the mechanism by which the department can buffer population swings. As an avid mule deer hunter, I love seeing abundant mule deer populations, but I am cognizant of the fact that we can have "too much" of a good thing. Deer populations in eastern Montana can recover quickly making antlerless harvest necessary but given the current population trends I am very supportive of restricting antlerless harvest to private land only. Even when deer populations are high, it would be difficult to make the claim that the portion of the population that resides on public land exceed the carrying capacity of the public land. Yet public land is where we put the majority of our antlerless hunting pressure. I fully understand that if populations grow too high, we are at elevated risk of disease and crop damage / depredation complaints become more prevalent, so we do need to have a system in place to address these concerns. However, when we try to mitigate disease risk and depredation we do so with a B-tags that are valid on public land. But the public land generally does not have the deer densities to make disease as high of a concern when compared to the neighboring private parcels nor is crop damage a concern unless populations exceed the carrying capacity of the land (which is not a concern with our current populations). By issuing B-tags that are valid on public land that is where the majority of pressure will be placed because access is easy. So, we are trying to solve a predominately private land issue by applying a treatment to public land, and when it does not work, it seems the departments typical response is to double down and issues more public land B-tags. I commend Commissioner Tabor for sticking up for our public land resource and proposing PLO B-tags. Private land is where we see the majority of our issues, private land is where we should focus on solving the problem. That said, if over-abundance on public land does become an issue it should be addressed through public land antlerless permits set by quota, not OTC B-Tags. As a first step, public land antlerless permits should require a hunter to validate their A-tag if they wish to have an antlerless opportunity. The major issue with our current public land B-tags, is a hunter will make an antlerless harvest to "fill the freezer" then will go back afield and be more "selective" when searching for a buck (or bull, but we are speaking to deer in this situation) thereby creating excessive public land pressure that leads to game distribution issues i.e. deer leave public and show up on private in part due to excessive public land pressure. I encourage the Commission to adopt this amendment, test it's effectiveness, and then grow this approach across the state. If this approach does lead to an increase in landowner complaints, I would encourage that we do not revert back to the old B-tag system, but we would leverage our "damage hunt" programs to take care of issues where issues exist, instead of trying to fix a private land issue with increased public land hunting pressure. On a related note, GoHunt just published an article looking at mule deer hunting pressure in Montana. This article dovetails nicely into this discussion. If you are interested it can be found here:

<https://www.gohunt.com/content/insider/tips/montana-mule-deer-population-harvest-success-and-hunter-trends-revealed> [gohunt.com]

I understand this is a topic for another day but this graphic presented in the article hits a major underlying issue of why there is so much contention around mule deer populations and harvest in eastern Montana and why Commissioner Tabor's Amendment is well received.

PERCENTAGE OF MULE DEER BUCKS TAKEN IN EACH REGION BY RESIDENCY (2022)



I would also like to express my support for Commissioner Tabor’s Unlimited Bighorn Sheep amendment. The rationale behind the amendment and concerns with the current tag structure are valid and should be addressed. I would encourage the Commission to adopt the amendment, but if the amendment cannot be adopted due to concerns with current MCA’s as presented with the department’s response, I would encourage that another approach is explored to address the concerns brought up by Commissioner Tabor.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.


Ian Wargo, P.E., L.S.I. | Project Manager
 p: 406-314-6413 | c: 406-253-9879 | e: iwargo@rpa-kal.com
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Wickman, Erik

From: Justin Schaaf <jschaaf71@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:49 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tabor Amendment- R7 Antlerless Mule Deer

I support the amendment brought forward by Commissioner Tabor to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer to private land only. However, I do wonder if it is the right decision to include lands enrolled in Block Management into the amendment.

Justin Schaaf
406-230-2822
Glasgow, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Justin Schaaf <jschaaf71@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:42 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commissioner Tabor Amendment- HD 700

To whom it may concern,

I would like to go on record as strongly opposed to Commissioner Tabor's amendment to increase the either sex 700-20 license from 200 to 250 and the either sex 700-21 license from 660 to 800. We just spent the last few years working with stakeholders all across the state to develop a new elk management plan that will help guide how we manage elk and what we expect for elk populations. That plan set a population objective for 700 at 1600-2400 elk. This proposal aims to increase licenses in a unit that is currently 18% below the bottom threshold for the population objective. I don't think it's wise for the commission to move forward with an amendment that would only make it more difficult for the district to reach the objective laid out in the most recent plan.

I urge you to vote NO on Commissioner Tabor's amendment and follow the newly implemented management plan.

Justin Schaaf
406-230-2822
Glasgow, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Christopher Wyant <wyantchristopher5@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:54 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 417

Why don't you guys start caring about the resident hunters that have lived here our entire lives and families have lived here for generations? All you are worried about in 417 is how it will affect the outfitters, they don't own the animals, all you care about is money anymore and it is sickening. The path that you guys have already laid is leading Montana to be a draw state only. Not a matter of if but when. Stop catering to non residents and outfitters, you have already destroyed our state enough.

Wickman, Erik

From: Andrew Soldano <mtandy1975@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 7:57 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unlimited Sheep Licenses

I do not agree that taking away someone's bonus points for participating in an unlimited hunt is a fair approach for management. What comes next after this, will you take my mule deer points for buying an over the counter deer tag? This idea just seems completely unfair. If this hunt is being over hunted, changing it from unlimited to a certain number of tags is a more honest and consistent approach. Calling something unlimited when you plan on limiting it seems dishonest and should be approached differently if there are lowering numbers of Sheep or to much pressure.

Wickman, Erik

From: steven stieler <smstieler@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 5:56 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Unlimited Bighorn Sheep License Amendment

FWP,

I want to see the unlimited bighorn sheep license be changed to Limited. Non resident hunters should not be allowed an OTC tag for sheep. Since this tag has become abused and now residents suffer from misuse I feel now that this special tag should be resident only. Non residents can only apply for draw tags through the general lottery for permit sheep tags. I also want FWP to change the language of a carcass license to a tag to avoid further confusion with other states if that's something that is possible. A hunting license is a license to hunt a tag is what you place on the animal after harvest.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Steven Stieler
Townsend, MT

Wickman, Erik

From: Doug Stickney <doug.stickney@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 10:23 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bighorn sheep

Commissioners,

I appreciate Commissioner Tabor's interest in to the bighorn sheep unlimited tag. I believe there are certainly some issues with increased interest of the tag. Step one would be to limited nonresidents to 10% of the total tags given out like most western states have historically done. This most likely will put the numbers more in line with where they should be. If this isn't successful then I think Commissioner Tabors amendment should be considered for residents. We need to put wildlife first, residents second, and then consider nonresidents for any decision in this state regarding wildlife.

Thanks,
Doug Stickney
Miles City MT

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Mike Krzan <mike.krzan@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 10:12 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Commissioners Tabors amendment on unlimited sheep

I strongly disagree. This is the last chance a hunter can get a sheep without a special draw. It takes years to learn the area and chances are slim is he really protecting the big horn sheep or just the outfitters that hunt the area?
I believe all special tags moose, goat or sheep should be once in a life time.

Thanks

Mike

Sent from my iPad

Wickman, Erik

From: Matthew Riordan <riordan24@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 9:12 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Pat Tabor Amendment

Pat Tabors amendment to forfeit bonus points upon purchase of an unlimited area sheep tag is total nonsense. This amendment is a ploy to reduce competition for outfitters guiding in lottery drawing sheep areas. Montana hunters have a great opportunity many others do not have, to be able to hunt sheep in an unlimited area. Many know, these areas are rugged and remote, and harvesting a sheep in these areas is quite difficult. It's a great opportunity for those who want to hunt sheep and continue to build their bonus point count in hopes of a coveted lottery sheep tag. Many hunt these unlimited areas for years, many of which do not harvest a sheep, but the opportunity to go into an area and sheep hunt is a great one that should not be changed.

There is no need or reason to change the way the unlimited areas tags are being handled. Were this amendment to be passed it would be a huge loss for Montanans and a huge slap in the face from FWP.

Please take my comment into consideration when deciding on this amendment.

Thank You

Matthew Riordan

Wickman, Erik

From: Tyler Brothers <tbro241975@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 8:03 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Sheep Tabor amendment

I support Tabor's amendment would establish procedures that require forfeiture of sheep bonus points upon purchase of an unlimited sheep license for HDs 300, 303, 500, 501 and 502 and that applicants for the unlimited license only be allowed to hold that license every 7 years! Please do not allow hunters to apply every other year. Follow the rules that they can apply after 7 years. I also support making sheep, goat and moose a once in lifetime permit. Thank you for your time.

Tyler Brothers
Hamilton MT

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: R D <rdenning3@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 6:47 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vice Chair Tabor 2

HD 417 is a prime example of outfitters shutting off access to OUR PUBLIC LANDS. Mabee road was the only road access to this area. Now, there are only two access points, both are where BLM touches Knox Ridge road and hardly allows anyone to access hunting throughout the entirety of 417. An outfitter shut down Mabee road and now private land owners have exclusive access to all the public land around Armells Creek.

So what if redrawn area 417 is large and contains a mix of private and public land? Who cares?

The eastern portion of the unit DOES NOT contain vast areas of accessible public land. Drive out there and see for yourself.

Deer numbers have plummeted in 417, and its because of the predators namely lions - ask any rancher out there. And, also its the out of staters shooting everything with OTC tags. 417 needs permit buck tags and NO doe tags AT ALL.

The northwest portion of 417 is not mostly private? Nope, it's actually mostly all BLM. Dog Creek is BLM and some APR land. Most everything north of Knox Ridge to the Missouri is BLM. Private land? very little private land there. The deer population in the northwest part of 417 does not appear to be under any stress? yes, yes it is, it's bad and it's because of the predators and out of staters.

This is amendment is unnecessary and the rationale provided is unclear and flawed. And, the department response is unacceptable.

Wickman, Erik

From: R D <rdenning3@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 6:23 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vice Chair Tabor 3

The antlerless harvest in region 7 AND region 6 and most everywhere else in Montana NEEDS to be stopped immediately. The FWP has failed the taxpayers of Montana, you have failed the sportsman, you have failed to responsibly manage deer in Montana. The over the counter doe tags must stop. You are selling out our Montana wildlife to out of staters that come here with CARGO TRAILERS, CHEST FREEZERS, and GENERATORS and shoot everything they see and then bone them out and drive back home with thousands of OUR DEER. Tabors amendment 3 needs to go further. All over the counter doe tags must stop for nonresidents NOW! Furthermore, ranchers in 6 and 4 are reporting significant lion activity killing off all the deer. The lions need to be killed back immediately, there are way too many lions out there eating all the deer.

Also, allowing tags for private land only will only benefit the outfitters. Outfitting is ANOTHER huge problem in Montana. Outfitters routinely close off public access with gates and locks and then sue to shut down public roads. Outfitting needs to be illegal in Montana. Tags for private land only are pathetic and elitist. Look up Mabee Road and HD 417, road closed and now HD 417 has almost no access at all except for the private landowners and outfitters that use OUR PUBLIC LAND FOR THEIR PROFIT.

Clearly you've kept the nonresident doe tags in place to kill off the deer for landowners that don't tolerate wildlife. Guess what? There's plenty of other states that the wildlife hating deer and elk farmers can move to anytime they want. They need to leave Montana and sell their land to someone that appreciates the vast and diverse wildlife resources that we have here. Respect our wildlife and manage it for us, not the farmers.

Wickman, Erik

From: Paul Curtis <paulcurtis06@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 9:38 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Limiting antlerless mule deer to private

Dear commission,

I have been a regular hunter of region 7 my whole hunting life. I took my first buck in region 7 in 2002.

Currently, the populations of mule deer in public land in region 7 is absolutely unacceptable and I highly support the amendment to limit doe harvest to private land.

Thanks you for considering my comment.

Paul Curtis

Wickman, Erik

From: e2py@nycap.rr.com
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 6:53 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to Vice Chair Tabor 3 - Deer Regulations - Region 7

I am writing to voice my opposition to this proposal.

FWP can already restrict R7 MD doe take through quotas and if the quotas are not low enough they should have authority granted to lower the minimum quota and/or granted authority to impose temporary/emergency regulations that would allow them to completely close the take of antlerless MD in any or all R7 hunting districts. This appears to benefit "non-BMA-enrolled" landowners and MOGA/outfitters to the detriment of residents who don't own land (there are plenty of them who rely on BMA/public) and nonresidents. How does this address the R7 MD antlerless population, which does not know or care if it's on private or public land?

Landowners enrolled in Block Management should be given the choice to allow MD antlerless take or not - just like some BMAs already restrict taking of deer, etc. Maybe their localized condition is that they have too many antlerless MD and need BMA hunters to thin that herd - this proposal takes away that option.

Respectfully,
Eric Tupaj
Niskayuna NY

Wickman, Erik

From: Michael Horvath <mphorvath@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 11:07 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] mphorvath@hotmail.com

Good evening,

I am a Maryland resident emailing you in support of the amendment proposed by Commissioner Pat Tabor to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land".

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,
Mike Horvath

Wickman, Erik

From: Neil Hansford <neil.hansford@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 6:49 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Antlerless Harvest Region 7

Good morning

I am a Montana resident and am emailing you in support of the amendment proposed by Commissioner Pat Tabor to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer to in Region 7 to "valid on private land only". While I do not feel that this goes far enough to address the decline in quality deer hunting in Region 7 (or other regions), it is a step in the right direction.

Thank you

Neil Hansford
Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android \[aka.ms\]](#)

Wickman, Erik

From: Mark Savinski <marksavinski@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:40 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL]

I am against all of the amendments proposed by Commissioners Burrows and Tabor. Tabor's amendment to allow hunting of antlerless mule deer on private land, but not on public land is particularly aggravating. There should be no hunting allowed for antlerless mule deer in the areas he proposed, period. I support Commissioner Brooke's amendment. Thank you, Mark Savinski.

Wickman, Erik

From: Jerry McGuire <mangeymoos@yaho.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 6:26 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments

Why is a Commissioner from Region 1 make ammendments for Region 7 and not the Commissioner from Region 7. I would like an explanation, Please .

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android \[mail.onelink.me\]](mailto:mail.onelink.me)

Wickman, Erik

From: Scott Moon <smoontana@live.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:52 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed elk regulations in 700

With elk populations in the breaks down significantly in the last few years (-43% by the numbers you provided) why in God's green earth does Tabor feel the need to kill more elk? What is wrong with you people? Is common sense so completely gone at FWP that you don't even acknowledge your own data? NO. NO. and NO on more elk tags. It's time to stop this nonsense.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android \[aka.ms\]](#)

Wickman, Erik

From: Christopher Mickey <cmickey96@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 1:42 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed Mule Deer Amendment

I fully support the following proposition: "I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission establish rules that limit the hunting and harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land," and that on all public lands and those lands enrolled in Block Management in Region 7 be closed to the taking of antlerless mule deer"

In order to not spoil any block management relations, allow the harvest of mule deer doe on properties where land owners desire such a thing. Even if the proposition doesn't have "a biologically meaningful effect", I think it will send a message to hunters that a) the commission is actually trying to help mule deer numbers b) maybe we as hunters should be more selective on mule deer harvest in general due to population decreases.

Best,

Chris

Wickman, Erik

From: Brian Rushing <brian@brian-rushing.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 1:06 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Antlerless Mule Deer Harvest in Region 7

Hello,

I am a Montana resident emailing you in support of the amendment proposed to limit the harvest of antler less mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land."

Thank you,
Brian Rushing

Wickman, Erik

From: Joe Voltmer <voltmerjoe@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 11:39 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Antlerless Harvest in Region 7

Good afternoon,

I am a Missouri resident emailing you in support of the amendment proposed by Commissioner Pat Tabor to limit the harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land".

I have hunted region 7 in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and seen a major decline in the mule deer herd in each subsequent year. By reducing antlerless harvest on public land, that increases the chance of me coming back to Montana to spend my Missouri dollars in the Montana economy. I would like to be able to enjoy hunting Region 7 for years to come.

Best regards,
Joe Voltmer

Wickman, Erik

From: Alec Vander Giessen <alecv@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 11:21 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Region 7 Doe Harvest

Good morning,

I wanted to speak up in favor of Commissioner Tabors proposal on restricting mule deer doe harvest in Region 7. I would encourage closing ALL mule deer doe harvest STATE-WIDE. As it seems the agency won't do any real changes to positively impact our ever declining deer herds, I think this would be a baby step in the right direction.

Please, for the sake of our future mule deer, pass this proposal.

Thanks,

Alec Vander Giessen

Wickman, Erik

From: Angela McCoy <angelamccoy57@icloud.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 10:51 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Region 7 Mule Deer Doe Harvest

Good day, I am a NR that has hunted MT regularly for deer since 1995. The population of deer where we hunt south of Ekalaka on private land the last 10 years has recently crashed. Drought and a blue tongue outbreak hurt the population for the prior few years, then the winter of 22/23 was devastating there. Where we saw 70-150 mule deer in a hay field, none is often the result now. WT were also decimated.

We did not hunt there in 22 and 23 to try and help the population recover where we hunt. Any proposal to limit or reduce doe harvest has my 100% support. I'd even suggest it for private land not in a BMA, it's that bad population wise there. We are in unit 705, perhaps a restriction by unit makes more sense than by region as I am sure there are pockets of good numbers in places. I'd also support limited buck harvest vs a general season for the next 2-3 years. Our MD need more help right now, let's give them some.

Thank you.

Tim McCoy
Pikmccoy@gmail.com

Sent from my iPad

Wickman, Erik

From: Dan G <dgagner33@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:41 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Season setting comments

Hello MT FWP Commissioners,

First off, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the upcoming season setting proposals. I believe there's a lot of good changes going into effect, most notably the recent amendment to limit mule deer doe harvest to private lands only in region 7. Our mule deer herds are struggling and the last thing we want is to decimate them even further and make the rebound that we need that much more difficult.

The other point I wanted to bring up was in regards to something that's not getting much attention, but I think it's becoming an issue negatively impacting the archery elk hunting in some of our best units in the central and eastern parts of the state.

A couple years ago, the new rule limiting the holder of a special elk permit to only hunt that unit, went into affect. At first, this seemed like a good idea, primarily in response to reducing hunter congestion. However, after experiencing it firsthand, and talking with other hunters who archery hunt these units, I feel it's actually doing the opposite. Most of these units are primarily private land with very liberal tag quotas. This is causing the permit holders to overcrowd the public, with the only choice to either keep pressuring the animals onto private land or stay at home. If hunters had the option to pull out of the unit and go to a general area with more public land and better access, it would help keep animals on public, eliminate crowding, and allow hunters to self-regulate the hunting pressure. Some of these units have several hundred to a thousand tags with a handful of public access points, which has turned what used to be a very enjoyable experience into "combat hunting" against everyone else. Please consider adding an amendment for this change for our upcoming season.

Thank you
Dan Gagner
Helena, MT
406-308-9708

Wickman, Erik

From: Mike Moore <bigskyrun@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:34 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Amendment to R7 mule deer doe hunting

Dear Commissioners,

I'd like to direct my comments to the recent amendment to R7 mule deer hunting, specifically this one:

Proposed amendment: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission establish rules that limit the hunting and harvest of antlerless mule deer in Region 7 to "valid only on private land," and that on all public lands and those lands enrolled in Block Management in Region 7 be closed to the taking of antlerless mule deer.

I served 24 years as a Montana Game Warden in Region 7 (1989-2013). I watched firsthand the slow reduction of our mule deer herd. In my opinion no one factor can be blamed, but obviously several years of drought, often combined with severe winter conditions, obviously contributed to this decline. Regardless of the causes, the decline is real and felt not just in Region 7, but across the entire Western States.

I think this amendment is a good start. Further curtailing doe harvest is in the best interest of our declining mule deer population and in the best interest of sportsmen, resident and nonresident alike.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Moore
890 Wolf Road
Helena, MT 59602

Wickman, Erik

From: Doug Stickney <doug.stickney@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:26 AM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Region 7 doe tags

I would like to thank Commissioner Tabor for bringing the amendment of private land only doe tags for region 7. This is an easy one to get behind and the accessible lands need it more than ever. I strongly support this amendment.

Thanks,
Doug Stickney

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: 7lazyp <7lazyp@3rivers.net>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 8:36 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Amendments and Black Bear Season Changes

FWP Commissioners, I would like to urge your approval of the amendments/season changes proposed. The changes to the 700 and 417 elk permits and quotas were arrived at collaboratively with a broad coalition. Mule deer doe harvest restricted to private land is really a no brainer, however it should be implemented statewide and not just in R7. Moving the black bear season closure to June 15 should improve opportunity, especially in late snow springs. Exceptions can be implemented where necessary.

Thank you

7 Lazy P Outfitting
Dusty & DANELLE CRARY
P.O. Box 1347
Choteau, MT 59422
406-466-2245

Wickman, Erik

From: Salvador Scrano <sscrano@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:51 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tabor Region 7 Mule Deer Doe proposal

The proposal to restrict the harvest of mule deer does in region 7 to only private land excluding land enrolled in Block Management is likely to have unintended consequences as was mentioned in the FWP comments to this proposal. Further, let it be acknowledged that the FWP biologists do an excellent job and their judgment as to how many tags need to be issued to harvest mule deer does is to be trusted. Those tags should be valid anywhere hunters can legally access. Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Kristopher George <kkgeorge2014@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:38 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment

Good afternoon

My wife and I wanted to take this opportunity to comment on a few things. We both support the changes in the sheep, goat, moose. We do not support a once in a lifetime draw on the big three. Limiting opportunity is always a bad choice. Getting rid of our bonus point system is a better option. Luck of the draw is the way to go. As for the mule deer draw in region 4. Those changes will over pressure surrounding units. We do support a three week general season with a draw the last two weeks like the units in the north west corner of region 4. Thanks for your time.

Sent from my iPad Sent from my iPad

Wickman, Erik

From: Kristopher George <kkgeorge2014@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:38 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public comment

Good afternoon

My wife and I wanted to take this opportunity to comment on a few things. We both support the changes in the sheep, goat, moose. We do not support a once in a lifetime draw on the big three. Limiting opportunity is always a bad choice. Getting rid of our bonus point system is a better option. Luck of the draw is the way to go. As for the mule deer draw in region 4. Those changes will over pressure surrounding units. We do support a three week general season with a draw the last two weeks like the units in the north west corner of region 4. Thanks for your time.

Sent from my iPad

Wickman, Erik

From: Salvador Scrano <sscrano@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:27 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tabor Region 7 antlerless mule deer proposal

I feel that the proposal to limit the harvest of antlerless mule to private land excluding block management would have a lot of unintended negative impacts. The FWP biologists do an excellent job and their judgement on the number of tags to be issued for mule deer does should be trusted. Further, those tags should be valid anywhere hunters can legally hunt.

Sent from my iPhone

Wickman, Erik

From: Joseph Haas <haas.joseph1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 12:53 PM
To: FWP Commission
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comments on Region 4 amendments

Commissioner Walsh

Our organization and individuals in region 4 support the proposed amendments to HD 417-20 (rifle) and 417-21 (archery) permit changes. Additionally, we support the proposal to change the district boundary for HD417 to its historic boundary which better reflects the biology and ecology of that area.

Thank you.

Joseph Haas
MOGA - Region 4 director