



AN ACT PROVIDING FOR AN INTERIM STUDY OF HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSING; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature establishes hunting and fishing license fees; and

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing license fees provide approximately \$34 million annually to fund most of the operations of the department of fish, wildlife, and parks; and

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing license fees are historically set at a stable level for 8 to 10 years, when revenue exceeds expenses and creates a surplus in the general license account; and

WHEREAS, revenue from hunting and fishing licenses no longer matches expenses, and the general license account has declined since fiscal year 2010; and

WHEREAS, the last major adjustment to hunting and fishing license fees was in 2005; and

WHEREAS, reduced cost hunting and fishing licenses for certain population groups result in approximately \$4 million less in general license account revenue; and

WHEREAS, the sale of hunting and fishing licenses has declined in recent years, most notably in 2011; and

WHEREAS, the general license account may be close to a critical point, and hunting and fishing license fee increases may be necessary to fund current operations.

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

**Section 1. Interim study -- evaluation of hunting and fishing licensing -- reporting.** (1) The environmental quality council shall conduct a study of Montana's hunting and fishing license statutes and fees, including:

(a) the appropriate roles of hunting and fishing license buyers and other fish and wildlife users in funding fish and wildlife management;

(b) options for improving the structural balance between revenue and expenditures for fish and wildlife

management;

(c) options for changing and simplifying Montana's hunting and fishing license structure and statutes;

(d) options to improve services and better meet the needs of license buyers;

(e) an assessment of the impact of free and reduced cost hunting and fishing licenses on the funding for fish and wildlife management and whether any of these licenses should be modified; and

(f) a comparison of license structures and fees in other states.

(2) The committee shall prepare a final report of its findings and conclusions and of its recommendations and shall prepare draft legislation whenever appropriate.

**Section 2. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$1,000 from the general fund for the biennium beginning July 1, 2013, to the legislative services division for use by the environmental quality council to complete the study required by [section 1].

**Section 3. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

**Section 4. Termination.** [This act] terminates December 31, 2014.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,  
HB 0609, originated in the House.

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Chief Clerk of the House

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Speaker of the House

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

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President of the Senate

Signed this \_\_\_\_\_ day  
of \_\_\_\_\_, 2013.

HOUSE BILL NO. 609  
INTRODUCED BY P. CONNELL

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