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The Honorable Steve Bullock
Governor of Montana
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801
RE: Veto request for HB 132 & HB 332

Dear Governor Bullock:

As independent National Audubon chapters, we are committed to supporting the conservation of Montana's birds and other native wildlife through education and habitat protection. That includes bison, which are our national mammal and are highly valued by hunters, wildlife watchers and our Native American community.

The organizations signified below write today asking you to veto both HB 132 and HB 332. These bills are misguided; HB 132 ignores the importance of these animals to Montanans and the nation by redefining all bison in the state as livestock and HB 332 would set a terrible precedent for managing public wildlife in our state. Management authority over wildlife resides with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, where professional staff considers wildlife science, habitat suitability and social factors when making difficult decisions about wildlife. Ceding that authority to county commissions, which have no professional wildlife staff and are stretched thin to meet numerous other needs, would not be in the interest of wildlife, hunters, landowners and all Montanans.

We ask that we do not violate the longstanding principle of letting Montana FWP manage wildlife, pit different constituencies against each other and further impede restoration of one of our most valued wildlife species.

For those reasons, please veto HB 132 and HB 332.

Sincerely,

Kay Mitchell, President
Flathead Audubon Society
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