

*** American Woodcock Society *** Anaconda Sportsmen *** Archery Trade Association *** Boone and Crockett Club *** Ducks Unlimited *** Delta Waterfowl Foundation *** Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana *** Flathead Wildlife Inc. *** Hellgate Hunters and Anglers *** Laurel Rod & Gun Club *** Montana Artemis Alliance *** Montana Bowhunters Association *** Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers *** Montana Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation *** Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society *** Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife *** Montana Trout Unlimited *** Montana Union Sportsmen Alliance *** Montana Wildlife Federation *** Montana Wild Sheep Foundation *** Mule Deer Foundation *** National Deer Association *** National Wildlife Federation *** Pheasants Forever *** Pope & Young Club *** Quail Forever *** Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association *** Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation *** Ruffed Grouse Society *** Safari Club International *** Skyline Sportsman Association ***

MT Senate President Jason Ellsworth
State Capitol
1301 E. Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

MT Speaker of the House Matt Regier
State Capitol
1301 E. Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

MT Senate Minority Leader Pat Flowers
State Capitol
1301 E. Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

MT House Minority Leader Kim Abbott
State Capitol
1301 E. Sixth Ave.
Helena, MT 59601

March 19, 2024

RE: Hunter, Angler, & Outfitter Support for SB 442 Veto Override

Dear Senator Ellsworth, Speaker Regier, Senator Flowers, & Minority Leader Abbott:

We write in support of Senate Bill 442, which your respective bodies will have the opportunity to make law in the coming weeks. We urge you and your caucuses to override the Governor's veto of this popular, bipartisan legislation.

Senate Bill 442 from Senator Mike Lang (R-Malta) was amended in Senate Finance and Claims on March 30th to restore funding for Montana's premier conservation program, Habitat Montana, as well as expand the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program as founded by former Representative Kelly Flynn. The bill also supports the HEART fund, which helps individuals and communities deal with drug addiction issues, provides increased benefits for veterans and their spouses, increases funding for criminal justice programs and provides a new, stable source of funding for county road maintenance.

This bill is worthy of the broad support it has received and should be recognized as an important bipartisan compromise. SB 442 brings Montanans together to keep our communities whole, improves the condition of the land, protects our hunting and fishing opportunities for future generations and offers support and recognition to the heroes and their spouses who served America in the armed services. This is a once-in-a-generation bill that meets the needs of many Montanans. Senator Lang's leadership on this has been heroic and stalwart. We deeply appreciate his willingness to work with all sides to arrive at a legislative fix that invests in rural Montana and the people who call it home.

For hunters, anglers, outfitters, and conservationists, the restoration of the Habitat Montana funding through a new Habitat Legacy Account is both innovative and critical for Montana's hunting and angling traditions. Our organizations are invested in the ongoing maintenance, stewardship, and restoration of private and public lands as we are committed to creating new opportunities to hunt and fish. SB 442 would provide a new funding tool to improve landowner tolerance of wildlife and help landowners respond to the challenges of prolonged

drought, invasive weeds and other environmental changes. Further, this legislation would protect funding for traditional habitat tools and establishes new tools to improve the condition of the land, improve the distribution of wildlife across public land, reduce conflicts between wildlife and livestock and help ensure better outcomes for hunters, anglers and landowners. The bill also aligns with the voters' intent in passing ballot initiative 190 of 2020.

We respectfully request that you encourage your caucuses to override the Governor's veto of SB 442.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society
Anaconda Sportsmen
Archery Trade Association
Boone and Crockett Club
Ducks Unlimited
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana
Flathead Wildlife Inc.
Gallatin Wildlife Association
Hellgate Hunters and Anglers
Laurel Rod & Gun Club
Montana Artemis Alliance
Montana Bowhunters Association
Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers
Montana Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation
Montana Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Montana Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife
Montana Trout Unlimited
Montana Union Sportsmen Alliance
Montana Wildlife Federation
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
National Deer Association
National Wildlife Federation
Pheasants Forever
Pope & Young Club
Quail Forever
Ravalli County Fish and Wildlife Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Skyline Sportsman Association