

1 _____ BILL NO. _____

2 INTRODUCED BY _____
3 (Primary Sponsor)

4 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING FUNDING TO MANAGE GRIZZLY BEAR
5 POPULATIONS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

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7 WHEREAS, Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks breaks Montana into seven regions for purposes of
8 administration and oversight; and

9 WHEREAS, Region 3 in Southwest Montana includes the counties of Beaverhead, Broadwater,
10 Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Park, Silver Bow, and part of Deer Lodge and encompasses
11 18,089 square miles, which is approximately 12% of the total land area of Montana; and

12 WHEREAS, Region 3 is home to both an expanding grizzly bear population and a growing human
13 presence. As human development increases and bear ranges continue to expand, the frequency and
14 complexity of human-wildlife interactions will also rise, necessitating additional resources for Fish, Wildlife, and
15 Parks staff to effectively manage conflicts; and

16 WHEREAS, Region 3 encompasses a vast geographical area, characterized by challenging terrain that
17 makes it impractical for current staff to respond to incidents occurring at opposite ends of the region within the
18 same day. Furthermore, bear management often requires extended periods of focused effort in specific
19 locations, sometimes lasting weeks, which can leave other areas in the region without adequate oversight; and

20 WHEREAS, additional bear technician staffing in Region 3 will not only enhance the agency's capacity
21 to manage grizzly bear populations effectively but also demonstrate a tangible commitment, both in human
22 resources and financial investment, toward the responsible management of a fully recovered grizzly bear
23 population.

24

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

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27 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated \$210,000 from the general
28 license account established in 87-1-601 to the department of fish, wildlife, and parks for each fiscal year in the

1 biennium beginning July 1, 2025, to fund budgeted positions for two full-time bear technicians in region 3.

2 (2) The appropriations in subsection (1) are intended to supplement base funding to the
3 department of fish, wildlife, and parks to fund these positions.

4 (3) The legislature intends that the appropriation in fiscal year 2027 be considered as part of the
5 ongoing base for subsequent legislative sessions.

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7 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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