

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2004

**Agriculture Committee**  
Livestock Operations, Oversight,  
Inspection and Policy, Policy Chairman  
General Farm Commodities and  
Risk Management  
Specialty Crops and Foreign  
Agriculture Programs  
  
**Resources Committee**  
Energy and Mineral Resources,  
Public Lands  
Forests and Forest Health

Mr. Steve Williams  
Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Williams:

I am concerned by the lack of budgetary information in the Proposed Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) for management of the National Bison Range. As you know, the end of the public comment period is drawing near, yet the public has not had the opportunity to review the estimated costs associated with a transfer of management functions from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

The taxpayers have been asked to comment on a proposal that lacks information regarding the costs associated with the transfer. It's difficult to comment on the substance of the issue when the budget figures are not available. I encourage you to work with the Office of Management and Budget to develop these figures and make them available to the public. Additionally, in an effort to ensure that all parties are involved, I urge you to consult the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes for input regarding these cost estimates.

I also request that you extend the public comment period and hold additional public meetings should the budget figures indicate the management transfer will increase costs to the American taxpayer. This is simply a matter of common sense and good government.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this issue. I will continue to monitor the situation closely and look forward to reviewing the funding information when it becomes available.

Sincerely,



DENNY REHBERG  
Montana's Congressman

DRR/kam

CC: Gail Norton, Secretary, Department of Interior  
Dr. Ralph Morgenweck, Director, Mountain-Prairie Region, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Fred Matt, Chairman, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

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