



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Fiscal Note 2027 Biennium

Bill#/Title: **HB0176 R: Require unlimited wolf hunting quota when population is at or above 450 wolves**

Primary Sponsor: Shannon Maness Status: As Introduced - Revised

- Included in the Executive Budget Needs to be included in HB 2 Significant Local Gov Impact
- Significant Long-Term Impacts Technical Concerns Dedicated Revenue Form Attached

FISCAL SUMMARY

	<u>FY 2026</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2028</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2029</u> <u>Difference</u>
Expenditures				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
Revenues				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
Net Impact	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
General Fund Balance	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

Description of fiscal impact

HB 176 removes the responsibility from the “commission” and the “department” to determine what a sustainable level of wolf populations would be and requires the FWP Commission to institute an “unlimited statewide quota” when the total gray wolf population in the state equals or exceeds 450 wolves and eliminates the requirements to buy additional harvest tags for hunters

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Assumptions

Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks

1. HB 176 removes the responsibility from the “commission” and the “department” to determine what a sustainable level of wolf populations would be and requires the FWP Commission to institute an “unlimited statewide quota” when the total gray wolf population in the state equals or exceeds 450 wolves.
2. HB 176 removes the FWP Commission’s discretion to apply different management tools across the State of Montana to determine what a sustainable level of wolves are in each Region. Additionally, it requires FWP to use the same iPOM modeling criteria from previous years, which could impact future development/updates to iPOM.
3. Under HB 176, a hunter would only need to purchase one wolf license to take an unlimited number of wolves. Currently, a hunter must possess a wolf license for each wolf they plan to harvest with a limit of 10 wolves per hunter. This would result in a loss of license revenue as currently an average of 14.73% of wolf hunters purchase more than one wolf license each year. The department estimates the average loss of revenue from wolf licenses would be \$32,322 per year.
4. FWP assumes the same number of hunters will apply and purchase these licenses in future years. The following table shows the total number of hunters purchasing wolf licenses from 2020-2024 with a 5-year average.

Residency	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024 (YTD)	5-year average
Resident	16,094	17,797	15,487	15,207	15,488	16,015
Nonresident	2,433	3,041	2,364	2,544	2,673	2,611

5. The following table shows the total individual hunters with more than one license and the total lost revenue based on HB 176 (5-year average). (approximately 14.73% of hunters purchase a second wolf license).

Residency	# of Hunters purchasing additional license	License Cost	Total Lost Revenue
Resident	2,156	\$12.00	\$25,872
Nonresident	129	\$50.00	\$6,450
Total	2,285		\$32,322 per year

- 6. HB 176 does not distinguish between resident and nonresident hunters, so nonresidents could also take an unlimited number of wolves on a single license.
- 7. HB 176 would not affect the revenue for trapping of wolves as a trapper can currently take up to 10 wolves with one license.

Fiscal Analysis Table

	<u>FY 2026</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2028</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2029</u> <u>Difference</u>
<u>Fiscal Impact</u>				
<u>Expenditures</u>				
Operating Expenses	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Expenditures	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
<u>Funding of Expenditures</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Funding of Expenditures	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
<u>Revenues</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
TOTAL Revenues	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)	(\$32,322)
<u>Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures)</u>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Significant Long-Term Impacts

1. FWP is involved in pending litigation concerning the state's wolf management. At this time, FWP anticipates it will receive a favorable outcome in the pending litigation. Passage of HB 176 could impact the outcome of the litigation which could result in fees associated with the case. Additionally, FWP has faced past litigation concerning wolf management, and if HB 176 were to pass the potential of future litigation by those Plaintiffs and/or other new Plaintiffs could be expected. Litigation costs associated with this bill could affect the FWP with long-term fiscal costs.

S. M.
Sponsor's Initials

1-21-25
Date


Budget Director's Initials

1/20/2025
Date