



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF  
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

## Fiscal Note 2027 Biennium

Bill#/Title: HB0568.02 (001): Provide for the Montana Hunters First Act

Primary Sponsor: Courtenay Sprunger Status: As Amended in Senate Committee

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

	<b>FY 2026 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2027 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2028 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2029 Difference</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Revenues</b>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Net Impact</b>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>
<b>General Fund Balance</b>				

### Description of fiscal impact

HB 568 is the Montana Hunters First Act. This bill requires the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to conduct a study on the impact of nonresidents on deer and elk hunting in the state and in each region. This random sampling will be completed through a mail survey that will cost \$40,000. This is a one-time study that must be completed by December 1, 2026.

### FISCAL ANALYSIS

#### Assumptions

#### Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks

1. HB 568, Section 2 requires the department to conduct a study of nonresident impacts on deer and elk hunting in the state and in each of the commission's administrative regions. The bill is specific to nonresident therefore the study will contain no resident data.
2. HB 568 requires the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to provide deer and elk estimates of hunters and hunter days for nonresident hunters, by region of public land, private land, and BMA's. To gather this data, it would require the sampling of 5,000 nonresidents for each species. FWP would draw from the licensing database. The value of 5000 samples each will provide enough responses by region to have reliable estimates.
3. This random sampling will be completed through a mail survey (so respondents have enough time to think through their responses when filling out the form). Mail surveys cost approximately \$4,000 per 1,000 surveys, making the total cost for the survey of 5,000 nonresidents estimated at \$40,000 (Deer Survey 5 x \$4,000 = \$20,000 and Elk Survey 5 x \$4,000 = \$20,000).
4. As amended, HB 568 adds upland game bird, migratory birds, and the acreage and duration of private leases to the study of nonresident impacts on hunting. Adding these additional surveys will cost an additional \$80,000. The total estimated cost for HB 568 is \$120,000.
5. HB 568 requires FWP to complete the study and report by December 1, 2026.

Fiscal Analysis Table

<b>Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks</b>				
	<b>FY 2026 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2027 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2028 Difference</b>	<b>FY 2029 Difference</b>
<b>Fiscal Impact</b>				
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Operating Expenses	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Expenditures</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Funding of Expenditures</b>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Funding of Expenditures</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Revenues</b>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$120,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL Revenues</b>	<b>\$120,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Net Impact to Fund Balance (Revenue minus Funding of Expenditures)</b>				
State Special Revenue (02)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

**Technical Concerns**

**Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (FWP)**

1. Collecting data or information relating to the acreage and duration of private land leases for hunting purposes is inaccessible. FWP does not have the statutory authority to collect or maintain any data or information relating to Montana private landowners' acreage and duration of private land leases, nor is there a publicly available data source. Licensed outfitters are required as part of their operations plan to submit attendant to licensing that provides a description of the private land, but this plan is confidential as a matter of law (ARM 24.171.408) and does not include anything regarding acreage or duration. There is no obligation on the part of private landowners to share this information via survey or otherwise.



Sponsor's Initials

3/17/25

Date



Budget Director's Initials

3/7/2025

Date