

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE  
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS  
LT. GOVERNOR

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Mark Blasdel  
President of the Senate  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59601

The Honorable Wylie Galt  
Speaker of the House  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59601

Dear President Blasdel and Speaker Galt:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 306 "AN ACT REVISING THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION; PROVIDING TRANSITION PROVISIONS FOR APPOINTMENTS TO THE COMMISSION; AMENDING SECTION 2-15-3402, MCA; AND PROVIDING A DELAYED EFFECTIVE DATE."

While I generally agree with the intent of this bill, I have two significant concerns with the legislation.

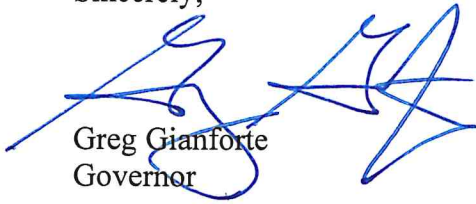
First, the bill seeks to require that three of the proposed seven commissioners be "landowners engaged in agricultural production." In Montana, many ranchers and farmers manage land through various business organizations, such as LLCs. It is possible that a person owning and managing land through an LLC or similar business structure would not be considered a "landowner." This would unnecessarily prevent many potential nominees from being considered for the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Second, the bill also defines "agricultural production" by listing four activities that could be considered as agricultural production activities. However, the insertion of the word "and" in subsection 3(c) could be construed as creating cumulative requirements, meaning that a potential nominee is required to be engaged in each of the four activities specified in subsections 3(a)-(d). This would likely be a prohibitive requirement to any person seeking nomination to the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

For these reasons, I veto SB 306, and look forward to working with the legislature in the future to further ensure that agricultural voices have a place in Montana's Fish and Wildlife Commission.

President Blasdel  
Speaker Galt  
May 14, 2021  
Page 2

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G. Gianforte', is written over the printed name and title.

Greg Gianforte  
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division  
Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State