



SIERRA CLUB

October 27, 2016

Vernon Finley, Chairman
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
P.O Box 278
Pablo, MT 59855

Dear Chairman Finley:

The Sierra Club would like to first take the time to thank the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for the opportunity to review the proposed legislation that would transfer the National Bison Range within the Flathead Indian Reservation. In general, the Sierra Club supports the proposal to transfer the National Bison Range (NBR) within the Flathead Indian Reservation in Montana into Federal Trust ownership as part of the reservation for the benefit of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

We respect the Tribes' cultural and historical connection to bison and that the NBR lies wholly within the Flathead Indian Reservation, on lands appropriated from the Tribes by the U.S. Government with minimal compensation. The Sierra Club affirms the concept of restoring the NBR and its bison to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for the purpose of bison conservation and ensuring the long-term health of the bison population. We support the restoration of the NBR to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes with continued public access and educational opportunities and a publicly-available management plan for such land, bison and natural resources. We respect the rights and accomplishments of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in managing bison, grizzly bears and other wildlife and lands within the reservation and the NBR.

We, however, have some concerns, which are important to highlight. The Sierra Club is particularly conscious of the political climate that exists currently. The political context is challenging and fraught with potential difficulties which we will have to monitor to assure the bill remains clean.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the proposed bill prior to introduction and are in support of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and your management of bison, and the restoration of the NBR to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

Very Respectfully,

Michael Brune
Executive Director
Sierra Club