



## Montana HB287 Mandatory Daily Trap Checks

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HB287 [Generally Revise Trap-Checking Requirements](#) **DIED**

***A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING MANDATORY TRAP AND SNARE CHECK REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING AN EXCEPTION; AND AMENDING SECTION 87-6-601, MCA.***

After multiple failed attempts through Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and the Wildlife Commissioners for 24 hr/daily trap checks to even open it for public comment and the dismal outlook for the Trapping Advisory Committee's resolution, Trap Free Montana Public Lands partnered with Wolves of the Rockies in requesting this bill. Representative Bridget Smith of Wolf Point was receptive in helping us. In listening to the trappers, before the bill language was finalized, we adjusted the language draft from a mandated 24 hour trap check to a mandated DAILY trap check in order to grant trappers more leeway and not have them potentially cited as within a strict 24 hour requirement.

HB287 includes an exception for a trapper under special circumstances who cannot attend to his/her traps daily to give permission to a licensed trapper. The regional Montana fish wildlife and parks is to be notified of the arrangement.

Some particulars in our language:

*(4) (a) Except as provided in 87-3-127 and subsection (4)(b) of this section, a person setting traps or snares for any animal shall check the traps or snares at least daily. An animal found in a trap or snare must be immediately removed or the trapper shall immediately notify a designated department employee or regional office to determine the disposition or collection of the animal.*

*(b) A person unable to comply with the provisions of subsection (4)(a) of this section due to special circumstances may give permission to a trapper licensed pursuant to Title 87, chapter 2, part 6, to comply with the provisions of subsection (4)(a) on the person's behalf for a period of up to 1 week from the last day the person tended the traps or snares personally. Notice of such authorization, including the name and automated licensing system number of the substitute trapper, must be given to the department's office for that administrative region within 24 hours. In addition, a substitute trapper shall comply with any other law or regulation in effect during that week.*

[To listen to the 2/7/19 hearing on HB287.](#)

In order to try to pass the bill, just prior to the vote, Representative Smith, the bill sponsor, made amendments and they passed 11:7. The amendments were include a 500' setback for traps on high use urban area trails and require a 48 hour trap check. Unfortunately, these amendments changed the principle enough that it no longer served the intent of the bill. Regardless, the [Montana House Fish & Wildlife Committee voted 12:6 against HB287 on 3/12/19 and the bill was tabled!](#)

Although our supporters are bipartisan, All Republicans on the committee and 2 Democrats voted against the bill. See below how they voted. Remember them.

In Montana, we only have two exceptions for trap checks! Traps set for bobcats in designated lynx protection zones require a 48 hour trap check. The other exception is traps set for wolves require a visual trap check every 48 hours. For ALL other targeted species, 48 hours trap checks is a recommendation in the regulations, not a requirement. All other traps

and snares can be left secreted, baited, unattended and unchecked legally for days, even weeks in Montana, leaving trapped animals to suffer indefinitely.

[LEARN MORE on Why we should have 24-hr-daily trap checks.](#)

Thank you to all our supporters who reached out urging a yes vote from Montana Legislators and especially those who joined us in Helena and gave excellent testimony in favor of HB287. However, only 13 wildlife advocates did so before the House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee. We were outnumbered by trappers 3:1. We appreciate Representative Bridget Smith for having the courage to take the very contentious issue of trapping on! Licensed trappers make up less than 1% of Montanans but they have money and much power.

Now, aside from the two limited exceptions, trapped animals, indiscriminately, will legally continue to be left to suffer in Montana until it is convenient someday for the trapper to return.

**The House Fish and Wildlife Committee members and their vote:**

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**Y** Rep. Bridget Smith (D) WOLF POINT, MT (The bill sponsor!)

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Remember them and please thank those who care about respectful, ethical, responsible and science based management of our wildlife and vote the others out next election!

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Hearing scheduled before the House Fish & Wildlife Committee 2/7/19 at 3:00 pm 172  
Capital, Helena

Montana has no required time frame a trapper must check his/her traps.

Only traps set for bobcats in designated lynx protection zones require a 48 hour trap check. The other exception is traps set for wolves require a visual trap check every 48 hours. 48 hours trap checks for all others is a recommendation in the regulations, not a requirement. All other traps and snares can be left secreted, baited, unattended and unchecked legally for days, even weeks in Montana, leaving trapped animals to suffer indefinitely.

Trapped animals are exposed to the elements, become dehydrated, have documented injuries, are at risk of frostbite and predation by other animals. The longer they are trapped the evidence shows the greater the damage.

Scientists and researchers that want the animal alive and uninjured conduct 24 hour trap checks at minimum. For most it is every 12 hours. This includes the practices of Montana FWP biologists.

Trappers say the number one reason they trap is for fun. The days of the mountain man trying to scrape by are long past. The findings are today's trappers have full time jobs. The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies states, "Make a commitment to check your traps at least once every day."

Here is the [language of HB287](#)

HB287 adjusted the original language from a **mandated 24 hour trap check** to a mandated DAILY trap check in order to grant trappers more leeway and not have them potentially cited as within a strict 24 hour requirement.

HB287 provides an exception for a trapper under special circumstances who cannot attend to his/her traps daily to give permission to a licensed trapper. The regional Montana fish wildlife and parks is to be notified of the arrangement.

HB287 isn't about ending trapping. It is about ending the legalized prolonged suffering of trapped animals whether that be a targeted species i.e. a coyote, a bobcat, pine marten, wolf or a protected one such as a raptor, wolverine, grizzly, deer, mountain lion, a lost dog or a working dog and giving the latter a better chance to survive and with less injuries once they are released from the trap.

There is no excuse to condone animal suffering. Ethical hunters do not. 36 other states have 24 hr/daily trap checks in their regulations. Our trapping regulations are an increasing black eye to our state of Montana and our management of our incredible precious wildlife.

If you live in the district of the Committee members be certain to let them know!

**Tell the legislator you will vote for or against them accordingly!**

CALLING THEM IS MOST EFFECTIVE! It's good if you can also follow up with an email.

Given the number of emails Montana Legislators receive be sure to put in the subject line:

Vote YES on **Trap Check Bill HB287!**

Always be respectful, stay on the topic at hand, and use your own words!

Briefer is better!

To email all the House Fish and Wildlife Committee members at once, copy and paste:

Bob.Brown@mtleg.gov; Ross.Fitzgerald@mtleg.gov; Zac.Perry@mtleg.gov;  
Seth.Berglee@mtleg.gov;  
brownformontana@gmail.com; neil.Duram@mtleg.gov; robformontana@gmail.com;  
john.Fuller@mtleg.gov;  
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repsmith@gmail.com; Sharon.StewartPeregoy@mtleg.gov; sue.Vinton@mtleg.gov;  
Denley.Loge@mtleg.gov  
Mark.Sweeney@mtleg.gov; Marvin.Weatherwax@mtleg.gov; winwithwhite@gmail.com

Subject line: Vote YES on **Trap Check** Bill HB287

**PLEASE BE SURE to let your own Legislator know that you want daily trap checks!**

**TRAPPING IS A BIPARTISAN ISSUE! Both Democrats and Republicans oppose it!**

To lookup your Representative and contact info: <https://leg.mt.gov/legislator-lookup/>

**No Animal Deserves to be Left Trapped for Days Exposed to the Elements because Montana Trappers say it is Too Inconvenient to Check their Traps every day!**



More Reasons for [24hr/Daily Trap checks](#).

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