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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Griego DATE TYPED: 3/17/03 HB _____
 SHORT TITLE: Game Depredation Program Amendments SB 734/aSJC/aSFI#1
 ANALYST: Wilson

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY03	FY04	FY03	FY04		
	NFI				

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Responses Received From
 Game & Fish Department (GFD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of SFI #1 Amendment

The Senate Floor #1 amendment states that nothing in the bill shall limit the right of landowner or lessee to seek compensation against the GFD for damages or limit the amount of compensation.

Synopsis of SJC Amendment

The Amendments adopted by the Senate Judiciary Committee inserts the terms “of that species” after “an animal”. The amended phrase in the bill now reads:

“and provided further, however, that a landowner who accepts more than one permit that allows the harvest of a bull or buck of the same species that is causing the property damage mane not take or kill an animal of that species pursuant to this section.”

Synopsis of Original Bill

Senate Bill 734 prohibits a landowner from killing depredating animals if he receives more than one permit from GFD to harvest a male of the same species causing the depredation damage.

SB 734 also amends language to allow landowners to reject intervention methods if it would

constitute a taking or permanently damage their private property.

In section 17-3-13.4, SB 734 deletes the word federal, making it no longer necessary to have a program for depredation damage on federal lands. The State and Private lands depredation program is still required.

In section 17-3-14.2, this bill adds language requiring GFD to only issue female or immature licenses for depredation hunting purposes, unless there is evidence that a male game animal is doing the damage.

Significant Issues

Occasionally, landowners will kill depredating game eating their pasture or crop. This can be a conflict as a landowner may kill or want others to kill the game, like elk, and yet still receives landowner permits he can sell or give away. It is extremely difficult to solve a landowners depredation problem by discouraging or taking the game on or near the property, when at other times the landowner gets hunting permits and provides hunting opportunities. This creates inconsistency or conflict because, on one hand, the game should be removed, and on the other, it should be present for hunting opportunities.

Landowners prefer to have male (buck or bull) permits because they have greater economic value. However, it is often females or the young of a species who are consuming range or crop forage. To adequately address this, the GFD needs to remove these animals, especially those that reproduce and have more young. Routinely, landowners want to negotiate for more male permits or authorization as a satisfactory intervention solution when they complain about depredation damage.

GFD supports SB 734 because it will lessen the likelihood of landowners negotiating for more bull or buck permits, and leave the females to reproduce and continue the depredation cycle.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

GFD manages the big game fund and must prioritize the depredation control projects because of insufficient funds. Deleting the word “federal” in SB 734 will allow the GFD to focus its depredation interventions on private lands. Striking “federal” will insure that the GFD doesn’t exhaust the fund in the future on some a large federal track of land such as a national forest.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

Administrators and resource managers will be able to focus conservation and wildlife management efforts on managing game like elk at carrying capacity and forage level sustainability, making for better multiple use management decisions.

DW/sb/njw/lis