Ben Raffety
Southwest Montana YMCA

Montana Federation of Quality Deer Herd Supporters:

I represent the concerns of Montana's sportsmen that oppose the harvest of immature buck deer. We support the view of harvesting a three point or higher on one antler or a doe deer. It would provide the younger deer a chance to survive and became a larger, more mature animal before harvest. It would also reduce the alarmingly high percentage of doe deer that are bringing down the quality of most Montana deer herds.

"Management of deer numbers is necessary to regulate or control deer herd health," quotes The Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. They also stated the following:

> For regulating deer herds, managing deer quality, and managing herd health, the most important aspect of harvest is doe harvest. Doe harvest is one of the most misunderstood yet most important aspects of deer management. When a deer population is near or above carrying capacity, its numbers and quality cannot be managed effectively through hunting without harvesting does.

Hunting District 340 Population Census

Species	Buck	Doe	Fawn	Total	Ratio
Mule	350	2,190	1,200	3,740	1:7:3
Whitetail	210	1,050	790	2,050	1:5:4

(Ratio +10%,-10%)

It is generally accepted that a fawn to doe ratio of .75 to 1.25 fawns per doe and a doe to buck ratio of 1.5 to 2.5 does per buck will contribute to a growing and healthy herd, but one that will not overpopulate an area. As shown in the above chart, the ratios are well over the desired ratios. In all the ratios they are at least double and even quadrupled as in the case of Mule Buck to Mule Doe then the recommended ratios.

Other factors that are increased due to overlarge deer herds include:

- Over population contributes to widespread disease in herd
- Large herds in concentrated areas increase inbreeding in herd
- Grazing impact on farmers and ranchers
- Increase in automobile vs. deer accidents

As shown above, the time has come to look at the numbers and realize that something has to be done to protect the quality of the Montana deer herd.

I support legislation that increases the antler requirement to harvest buck deer and increase doe harvest.

This document is in compliance with the Montana YMCA Youth Legislature Lobbyist Disclosure policy.