_____ BILL NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____

BY REQUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO THE INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL; REVISING THE STRUCTURE, DUTIES, AND OPERATION OF THE COUNCIL; REVISING THE DEFINITION OF "INVASIVE SPECIES"; AMENDING SECTIONS 2-15-3309 AND 80-7-1203, MCA; AND PROVIDING A TERMINATION DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 2-15-3309, MCA, is amended to read:

"**2-15-3309. Invasive species council.** (1) There is an invasive species council within the department of natural resources and conservation. The council is attached to the department for administrative purposes only, as prescribed in 2-15-121.

(2) The council consists of the following ~~22~~ 23 members:

(a) the directors of the following departments or their designees:

(i) fish, wildlife, and parks;

(ii) natural resources and conservation;

(iii) transportation;

(iv) agriculture; ~~and~~

(v) commerce; and

(vi) livestock;

(b) a representative of each of the following appointed by ~~and serving at the pleasure of~~ the governor:

(i) county weed districts;

(ii) conservation districts;

(iii) the Montana state university extension service;

(iv) agriculture;

(v) conservation organizations;

(vi) wildlife organizations;

(vii) fishing organizations;

(viii) the hydropower utility industry;

(ix) private landowners; and

(x) each of the tribal governments in Montana.

(3) The council ~~shall~~ may seek active input and participation in its deliberations from the U.S. army corps of engineers, the U.S. bureau of reclamation, the U.S. bureau of land management, the U.S. department of agriculture animal and plant health inspection service, the U.S. fish and wildlife service, the U.S. natural resources conservation service, U.S. customs and border protection, the U.S. department of defense, the U.S. forest service, and the national park service.

(4) The council members shall serve without pay. Unless otherwise provided by law, each council member is entitled to be reimbursed for travel expenses pursuant to 2-18-501 through 2-18-503.

(5) Council members shall serve staggered 4-year terms.

(6) A majority of ~~the membership of the council~~ current members, without taking into account vacancies, constitutes a quorum to do business. A favorable vote of ~~at least~~ a majority of ~~all of~~ the members present and casting a vote is required to adopt any resolution, to approve a motion, or to ~~make~~ take any other ~~decision~~ action.

(7) The council shall meet no less than twice annually.

(8) The governor shall appoint the presiding officer, who shall serve in that capacity for a 2-year term.

(9) The presiding officer and the director of the department of natural resources and conservation shall serve as the council's liaisons to the governor's office."

Section 2. Section 80-7-1203, MCA, is amended to read:

"**80-7-1203. Duties -- reporting -- definition.** (1) The invasive species council shall:

(a) provide policy level recommendations, direction, and planning assistance for combating

infestations of invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of other invasive species;

(b) foster cooperation, communication, and coordinated approaches that support federal, state, provincial, regional, tribal, and local initiatives for the prevention, early detection, and control of invasive species;

(c) identify, coordinate, and maintain an independent science advisory panel that informs Montana's efforts based on the current status, trends, and emerging technology as they relate to invasive species prevention and management in Montana;

(d) in coordination with stakeholders, identify and implement priorities for coordination, prevention, early detection, rapid response, and control of invasive species in Montana;

(e) champion priority invasive species issues identified by stakeholders to best protect the state;

(f) advise and coordinate with agency personnel, local efforts, and the scientific community to implement program priorities;

(g) implement an invasive species education and outreach strategy;

(h) create a poster that provides information related to preventing the spread of invasive species and provide copies of the poster to the department of transportation for display at rest areas;

(i) work with regional groups to coordinate regional defense and response strategies; and

(j) work toward establishing and maintaining permanent funding for invasive species priorities.

(2) The council may receive and, subject to appropriation by the legislature, expend donations, gifts, grants, and other money necessary to fulfill its duties.

(3) The council shall report on its activities to the governor, the director of the department of natural resources and conservation, and the environmental quality council in accordance with 5-11-210 annually.

(4) For the purposes of this part, "invasive species" means ~~plants, animals,~~ organisms and pathogens that are nonnative to Montana's ~~ecosystem~~ ecosystems and are likely to cause harm to Montana's natural and cultural resources, the economy, and human health."

NEW SECTION. **Section 3. Termination.** [Sections 1 and 2] terminate June 30, 2031.

- END -