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112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3248

To designate the North American bison as the national mammal of the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 24, 2012

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. MORAN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. JOHANNS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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A BILL

To designate the North American bison as the national mammal of the United States.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''National Bison Legacy Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) bison are considered to be a historical symbol of the United States;

(2) bison were integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of many Indian tribes through trade and sacred ceremonies;

(3) there are more than 60 Indian tribes participating in the Intertribal Buffalo Council;

(4) numerous members of Indian tribes—

(A) are involved in bison restoration on tribal land; and

(B) have a combined herd on more than 1,000,000 acres of tribal land;

(5) the Intertribal Buffalo Council is a tribal organization incorporated pursuant to section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as ''Indian Reorganization Act'') (25 U.S.C. 477);

(6) bison play an ecologically important role in modifying and improving the types of grasses found in landscapes to the benefit of grassland ecosystems;

(7) a bison has been depicted on the official seal of the Department of the Interior almost continuously for 94 years;

(8) a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

(9) the bison has been adopted by 3 States as the official mammal of those States;

(10) the buffalo nickel played an important role in modernizing the currency of the United States;

(11) several sports teams have the bison as a mascot, which highlights the iconic significance of bison in the United States;

(12) on December 8, 1905, William Hornaday, Theodore Roosevelt, and others formed the American Bison Society in response to the near extinction of bison in the United States;

(13) on October 11, 1907, the American Bison Society sent 15 bison to the first big game refuge in the United States, which was known as the ''Wichita Reserve Bison Refuge'';

(14) in 2005, the American Bison Society was reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers, managers from Indian tribes, Federal and State agencies, conservation organizations, and natural and social scientists from the United States, Canada, and Mexico to create a vision for the North American bison in the 21st century;

(15) bison hold significant economic value for private producers and rural communities;

(16) as of 2007, the United States had 4,499 bison producers creating jobs and providing a sustainable and healthy meat source contributing to the food security of the United States;

(17) there are bison herds in National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks; and

(18) members of Indian tribes, bison producers, conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other public and private partners have committed to spearheading a national celebration of the North American bison, to be held annually on the first Thursday of November.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BISON AS THE NATIONAL MAMMAL.

The mammal commonly known as the ''North American bison'' is designated as the national mammal of the United States.

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