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Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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Resolution 1996-02-06

**SUPPORT FOR THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE
INTERAGENCY BRUCELLOSIS COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, brucellosis, a disease of domestic livestock, is endemic to elk and bison in the greater Yellowstone area, including Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks; and

WHEREAS, within the national parks, elk and bison are managed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the National Park Service and through a policy of natural regulation; and

WHEREAS, when elk and bison migrate from a national park, they are managed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the state that they enter; and

WHEREAS, brucellosis is managed according to the provision of the National Brucellosis Eradication Program, a policy that has been approved by the United States Department of Agriculture APHIS Veterinary Services and that is implemented by state livestock disease control authorities; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the National Brucellosis Eradication Program is to eradicate brucellosis from the nation's livestock industry by the year 1998; and

WHEREAS, the livestock industry in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho is classified, according to the National Brucellosis Eradication Program, as brucellosis-free; and

WHEREAS, the uncontrolled migration of disease-affected elk and bison into Wyoming, Montana and Idaho is a potential source of brucellosis reinfection in livestock in those three states and a potential justification for downgrading their brucellosis-free classification; and

WHEREAS, the loss of brucellosis-free status would be a significant negative consequence to the livestock industry in the affected state; and

WHEREAS, conflicting mandates and policies of the various responsible agencies prevent responsible management of elk and bison in the greater Yellowstone area; and

WHEREAS, at the invitation of the Governors of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, the Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee (GYIBC) was formed to provide a basis for interagency cooperation in the management of brucellosis-affected elk and bison; and

WHEREAS, the goal of the GYIBC is to “protect and sustain the existing free-ranging elk and bison populations in the greater Yellowstone area and protect the public interests and economic viability of the livestock industry in the states of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana”; and

WHEREAS, the GYIBC has agreed upon a framework for completing a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that would address management of brucellosis-affected elk and bison in the greater Yellowstone area; and

WHEREAS, completion of the programmatic EIS may require substantial funding and may take up to four years to complete;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies expresses its support for the goal, mission and objectives of the GYIBC.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies agrees that completion of a programmatic EIS or other appropriate NEPA compliance measure is necessary to develop a responsible approach to manage elk and bison in the greater Yellowstone area.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies requests the Congress of the United States to provide funds for the development and implementation of the programmatic EIS, or other appropriate NEPA compliance measures.