

# Montana State Senate



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## Press Release

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### **State Senate Ag Committee Encourages Congress to Oppose Mandatory Animal Identification**

(Helena) - The members of the Montana Legislature's Senate Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Committee have sent a letter to the state's Congressional Delegation regarding the National Animal Identification System, (NAIS).

The letter urges Senator Max Baucus, Senator John Tester, and Congressman Denny Rehberg to "oppose any federal effort to force producers to participate" in NAIS, which has been operating as a voluntary program since 2006. The Senate Ag Committee informed the delegation that they had heard much testimony from a variety of Montana producers and groups who supported voluntary participation in market-driven identification programs, but who urged lawmakers to resist efforts to mandate participation by ranchers in the NAIS program.

According to Senator Taylor Brown, the catalyst for this letter was a bill introduced in the 61<sup>st</sup> State Legislature by Representative Lee Randall of Broadus. House Bill 592 attempted to establish in Montana law, certain restrictions on state participation in any national animal verification system.

"Thanks to Lee Randall's bill, the committee received a lot of testimony on this issue," said Brown, "And although we did not reach agreement on the wording in HB 592, we were unanimous that its core message should be forwarded to our Congressional Delegation." Brown helped author the bi-partisan letter which was sent on March 26<sup>th</sup>, and was signed by all nine members of the Senate's Ag Committee.

Currently at least two bills on a national animal traceability system are being considered in Washington, including H.R. 875 by Rep. Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, and H.R. 814 Rep. Diana DeGette of Colorado.

Enc: March 26 letter from Montana Senate Ag Committee  
Excerpts from HR.875 and H.R. 814