

S. _____

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 makes the following findings:

- (1) A bison has been depicted on the Department of the Interior’s official seal almost continuously for the past 94 years; a bison is portrayed on two state flags; the “buffalo nickel” is a collector’s item; and several sports teams have the bison as a mascot—all of which highlight the iconic significance of bison in the United States.
- (2) Bison are an ecological keystone species, modifying the types of grasses found in landscapes to the benefit of grassland birds including those important to hunters, like prairie grouse.
- (3) Bison were integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of Native Americans through trade, social ceremonies and religious rituals. Today there are over 60 member tribes participating in the Intertribal Buffalo Council and numerous individual Tribal members who are currently involved in buffalo restoration and have a combined herd on over 1,000,000 acres of Tribal lands. The Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) is a federally chartered Indian Organization under Section 17 of the Indian Reorganization Act.
- (4) Bison are considered a symbol of frontier culture in the United States and sustained early settlers and traders.
- (5) In response to the near extinction of bison, William Hornaday, Theodore Roosevelt and others formed the American Bison Society on December 8, 1905 which sent fifteen bison to the nation’s first big-game refuge, Wichita Reserve Bison Refuge in Oklahoma, on October 11, 1907.
- (6) In 2005, the American Bison Society was reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers, Native American managers, federal and state agencies, conservation organizations, and natural and social scientists from the United States, Canada and Mexico. This diverse group of stakeholders has come together to create a 21st century vision for the North American bison.

- (7) Bison hold significant economic value for private producers and rural communities. As of 2007, the United States had 4,499 bison producers creating jobs, providing a sustainable and healthy meat source, and contributing to our nation's food security.
- (8) There are sixteen bison herds on federal lands, including National Wildlife Refuges and National Parks, like Yellowstone.

Sec. 3. National Mammal.

- (a) Designation – The North American bison shall be known and designated as the ‘National Mammal of the United States’.
 - (1) The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to commemorate the designation on November XX of each year.
 - (2) November XX shall be known and designated as ‘National Bison Day.’