

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United
States.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Bison Legacy
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) bison are considered a historical symbol of
9 the United States;

1 (2) bison were integrally linked with the eco-
2 nomic and spiritual lives of many Indian tribes
3 through trade and sacred ceremonies;

4 (3) there are more than 60 Indian tribes par-
5 ticipating in the Intertribal Buffalo Council;

6 (4) numerous members of Indian tribes are in-
7 volved in bison restoration on tribal land;

8 (5) members of Indian tribes have a combined
9 herd on more than 1,000,000 acres of tribal land;

10 (6) the Intertribal Buffalo Council is a tribal
11 organization incorporated pursuant to section 17 of
12 the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the
13 “Indian Reorganization Act”) (25 U.S.C. 477);

14 (7) bison can play an important role in improv-
15 ing the types of grasses found in landscapes to the
16 benefit of grasslands;

17 (8) a small group of ranchers helped save bison
18 from extinction in the late 1800s by gathering the
19 remnants of the decimated herds;

20 (9) bison hold significant economic value for
21 private producers and rural communities;

22 (10) according to the 2012 Census of Agri-
23 culture of the Department of Agriculture, as of
24 2012, 162,110 head of bison were under the stew-
25 ardship of private producers, creating jobs and pro-

1 viding a sustainable and healthy meat source con-
2 tributing to the food security of the United States;

3 (11) on December 8, 1905, William Hornaday,
4 Theodore Roosevelt, and others formed the Amer-
5 ican Bison Society in response to the near extinction
6 of bison in the United States;

7 (12) on October 11, 1907, the American Bison
8 Society sent 15 captive-bred bison from the New
9 York Zoological Park, now known as the “Bronx
10 Zoo”, to the first wildlife refuge in the United
11 States, which was known as the “Wichita Mountains
12 Wildlife Refuge”, resulting in the first successful re-
13 introduction of a mammal species on the brink of ex-
14 tinction back into the natural habitat of the species;

15 (13) in 2005, the American Bison Society was
16 reestablished, bringing together bison ranchers,
17 managers from Indian tribes, Federal and State
18 agencies, conservation organizations, and natural
19 and social scientists from the United States, Can-
20 ada, and Mexico to create a vision for the North
21 American bison in the 21st century;

22 (14) there are bison herds in National Wildlife
23 Refuges and National Parks;

24 (15) there are bison in State-managed herds
25 across 11 States;

1 (16) there is a growing effort to celebrate and
2 officially recognize the historical, cultural, and eco-
3 nomic significance of the North American bison to
4 the heritage of the United States;

5 (17) a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

6 (18) the bison has been adopted by 3 States as
7 the official mammal or animal of those States;

8 (19) a bison has been depicted on the official
9 seal of the Department of the Interior since 1912;

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

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

15 (22) in the 2nd session of the 113th Congress,
16 22 Senators led a successful effort to enact a resolu-
17 tion to designate November 1, 2014, as the second
18 annual National Bison Day; and

19 (23) members of Indian tribes, bison producers,
20 conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other
21 public and private partners have participated in the
22 annual National Bison Day celebration at several
23 events across the United States and are committed
24 to continuing this tradition annually on the first
25 Saturday of November.

1 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND ADOPTION OF THE NORTH**
2 **AMERICAN BISON AS THE NATIONAL MAM-**
3 **MAL.**

4 The mammal commonly known as the “North Amer-
5 ican bison” is adopted as the national mammal of the
6 United States.