

SENATE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE REPORT

	March 20, 2025
Chair of Committee	Date

Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

After consideration on the merits, the Committee recommends the following:

SB25-053 be amended as follows, and as so amended, be referred to the Committee on Appropriations with favorable recommendation:

1 Amend printed bill, page 2, after line 1 insert:

2 **"SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general
3 assembly finds and declares that:

4 (a) The history of the American bison is deeply intertwined with
5 the history of indigenous peoples in North America. Once roaming the
6 continent in vast herds numbering in the tens of millions, bison are a
7 cornerstone of life for many American Indians and are revered as sacred
8 relatives. Many American Indians and Tribal Nations continue to rely
9 upon bison for survival, including for food, shelter, and clothing.

10 (b) Recognizing the bison's critical role in the livelihood of
11 indigenous peoples and in the campaign to continue European claim and
12 control over lands inhabited by indigenous peoples, the United States
13 government implemented a scorched-earth policy, granting military
14 commanders the authority to decimate bison populations;

15 (c) Over a span of 40 years, more than 30 million bison were
16 killed. This mass extermination was not only wasteful and inhumane but
17 also a calculated effort to undermine the cultural and physical survival of
18 indigenous peoples.

19 (d) Colonel Richard Irving Dodge infamously declared, "Kill
20 every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone." The policy
21 of killing bison had devastating impacts on American Indians and Tribal
22 Nations and played a significant role in the federal government's efforts
23 to destroy tribal sovereignty. The resulting food and cultural scarcity
24 played a significant role in the forced relocation of the plains peoples
25 from Colorado in the late 1860s. It also contributed to the pressures
26 restricting the Ute people to western Colorado.

27 (e) By the time Colorado achieved statehood in 1876, hunting and

- 1 habitat destruction caused by the development of farms, cities, and
2 railroads had reduced the bison population to only a few hundred south
3 of the Platte river;
- 4 (f) Colorado seeks to protect, serve, and honor the enduring bond
5 between bison and American Indians and Tribal Nations by classifying
6 certain bison as wildlife; and
- 7 (g) This action represents a step toward making amends for the
8 attempted genocide of American Indians through the eradication of their
9 food source, the bison."
- 10 Renumber succeeding sections accordingly.
- 11 Page 2, lines 2 and 3, strike "(2), (29)," and substitute "(2)".
- 12 Page 2, strike lines 14 through 16.
- 13 Page 3, strike line 1 and substitute "BISON, BISON LEGALLY REDUCED TO
14 CAPTIVITY, OR BISON THAT HAVE ESCAPED LAWFUL CAPTIVITY;"
- 15 Page 3, after line 1 insert:
- 16 "(II) BISON OWNED BY OR LAWFULLY REDUCED TO CAPTIVITY BY
17 AN INDIAN TRIBE; OR".
- 18 Renumber succeeding subparagraph accordingly.
- 19 Page 3, line 2, strike "determined to be" and substitute "~~determined to be~~
20 CLASSIFIED AS".
- 21 Page 3, strike line 5 and substitute:
- 22 "(d) ~~Such determination within this statute shall~~ A
23 CLASSIFICATION MADE UNDER".
- 24 Page 3, line 6, strike "(51)(c)(II)" and substitute "(51)(c)(III)".
- 25 Page 3, strike lines 12 through 19 and substitute "takes effect January 1,
26 2026; except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1
27 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section,
28 or part of this act within the ninety-day period after final adjournment of
29 the general assembly, then the act, item, section, or part will not take
30 effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in

- 1 November 2026 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the
- 2 official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.".

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