

112TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3248

To designate the North American bison as the national mammal of the
United States.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 24, 2012

Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BENNET, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. MORAN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. JOHANNES, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To designate the North American 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 to be a historical sym-
9 bol of 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—

7 (A) are involved in bison restoration on
8 tribal land; and

9 (B) have a combined herd on more than
10 1,000,000 acres of tribal land;

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

15 (6) bison play an ecologically important role in
16 modifying and improving the types of grasses found
17 in landscapes to the benefit of grassland ecosystems;

18 (7) a bison has been depicted on the official
19 seal of the Department of the Interior almost con-
20 tinuously for 94 years;

21 (8) a bison is portrayed on 2 State flags;

22 (9) the bison has been adopted by 3 States as
23 the official mammal of those States;

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

1 (11) several sports teams have the bison as a
2 mascot, which highlights the iconic significance of
3 bison in the United States;

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

8 (13) on October 11, 1907, the American Bison
9 Society sent 15 bison to the first big game refuge
10 in the United States, which was known as the
11 “Wichita Reserve Bison Refuge”;

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

19 (15) bison hold significant economic value for
20 private producers and rural communities;

21 (16) as of 2007, the United States had 4,499
22 bison producers creating jobs and providing a sus-
23 tainable and healthy meat source contributing to the
24 food security of the United States;

1 (17) there are bison herds in National Wildlife
2 Refuges and National Parks; and

3 (18) members of Indian tribes, bison producers,
4 conservationists, sportsmen, educators, and other
5 public and private partners have committed to spear-
6 heading a national celebration of the North Amer-
7 ican bison, to be held annually on the first Thursday
8 of November.

9 **SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN BISON AS**
10 **THE NATIONAL MAMMAL.**

11 The mammal commonly known as the “North Amer-
12 ican bison” is designated as the national mammal of the
13 United States.

○