



-WOHEHIV-
The Morning Star

**NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE
ADMINISTRATION**

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The Northern Cheyenne Tribe's Opposition to H.R. 1245 and H.R. 1419
Submitted to the House Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries

Dear Chairman Bentz,

The Northern Cheyenne people once shared our traditional homelands in the Tongue River and Powder River Basins with grizzly bears. Grizzly bears once ranged throughout the traditional territory of the Northern Cheyenne people, including lands within the boundaries of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in southeast Montana. However, like the territory of the Northern Cheyenne people, the range of the grizzly bear was vastly diminished as the result of encroachment by settlers and prospectors beginning in the 19th century. Since that time, grizzly bears in the region have been limited to Yellowstone National Park and surrounding areas and they are no longer present on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation.

The Northern Cheyenne people view the grizzly bear as a spiritual relative and have great respect for the bear's strength and power, as well as its right to live free from harm. We believe that the Creator gave the grizzly bear a spirit in the same way that the Creator gave us a spirit, and that the grizzly bear has a right to exist and to be left alone.

We believe that the Tribe has a sacred responsibility to speak for the grizzly bear, which cannot speak for itself. In our view, this is equivalent to our obligation to speak on behalf of members of our family when they are unable to speak up for their own interests.

The Tribe opposes any effort by Congress to reduce legal protections for grizzly bears in Montana and Wyoming. Such legislative delisting would almost certainly result in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho opening up hunting seasons for grizzlies. Recreational trophy hunting of grizzly bears flies in the face of the Northern Cheyenne belief that the grizzly bear is sacred and a gift of the Creator. Hunting a grizzly is like hunting one of our relatives—it's disturbing. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe will not be satisfied until grizzly bears are restored to their former range and the Northern Cheyenne people are able to resume their traditional practices involving grizzly bears.

Sincerely,

William Walksalong
Tribal Administrator

LITTLE WOLF AND MORNING STAR – Out of defeat and exile they led us back to Montana and won our Cheyenne homeland that we will keep forever.