

# Senator Linda Menard

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Juneau, Alaska 99801



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## Alaska State Legislature

### Sponsor Statement for SB 58

Senate Bill 58, an act establishing February 2<sup>nd</sup> of each year as Marmot Day, will create a localized, Alaska version of Groundhog Day.

While many people in the Lower 48 spend every February 2<sup>nd</sup> honoring Punxsutawney Phil, or some other incarnation of the famous groundhog, Alaska residents don't have the same representation.

The Marmot Day bill (SB 58) solves that, giving school children, public institutions and even adults the opportunity to use a local hire (the marmot) as their symbol.

Marmot Day can be celebrated in myriad ways, from special events at the Alaska Zoo to school celebrations with an educational angle so children can learn more about Alaska's furry ground squirrel.

Already, the Marmot Day bill has received support from the Alaska Zoo and the Mat-Su Borough School District.

I hope you will also support the Marmot Day bill.

**SENATE BILL NO. 58**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**BY SENATOR MENARD**

**Introduced: 1/21/09**

**Referred: State Affairs, Resources**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act establishing February 2 of each year as Marmot Day; and providing for an**  
2 **effective date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **\* Section 1.** AS 44.12 is amended by adding a new section to Article 2 to read:

5 **Sec. 44.12.110. Marmot Day.** Marmot Day is established on February 2 of  
6 each year. The day may be observed by suitable observances and exercises by school  
7 programs, the Alaska Zoo, civic groups, and the public.

8 **\* Sec. 2.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: SB 58  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifier (file name): HB019-GOV-OMB-3-02-09 Dept. Affected: All  
 Title Establishing February 2 as Marmot Day RDU \_\_\_\_\_  
 Component \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sponsor Sen. Menard Component Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requester Senate State Affairs Committee

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>								
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>								
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITIONS**

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

After burrowing into the details of this legislation, we have determined that the bill will not have a significant fiscal impact on any State agency.

Prepared by: Jack Kreinheder, Senior Analyst  
 Division Office of Management and Budget  
 Approved by: Karen Rehfeld, Director  
Office of Management and Budget

Phone 465-4676  
 Date/Time 3/2/09 11:45 AM  
 Date 3/2/2009

# Marmot

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Marmots** are members of the genus *Marmota*, in the rodent family Sciuridae (squirrels).

Marmots are generally large ground squirrels. Those most often referred to as marmots tend to live in mountainous areas such as the Alps, northern Apennines, Carpathians, Tatra, and Pyrenees in Europe, the Rockies and the Sierra Nevada in the United States, and Northern Canada. However, the groundhog is also properly called a marmot, while the similarly-sized but more social prairie dog is not classified in the genus *Marmota* but in the related genus *Cynomys*.

Marmots typically live in burrows, and hibernate there through the winter. Most marmots are highly social, and use loud whistles to communicate with one another, especially when alarmed.

The name *marmot* comes from French *marmotte*, from Old French *marmotan*, *marmontaine*, from Old Franco-Provençal, from Low Latin *mures montani* "mountain mouse", from Latin *mures monti*, from Classical Latin *mures alpini* "Alps mouse".

Marmots mainly eat greens. They eat many types of grasses, berries, lichens, mosses, roots and flowers.

## Contents

- 1 Species
- 2 Examples of species
- 3 References
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## Species

The following is a list of all *Marmota* species recognized by Thorington and Hoffman (2005). They divide marmots into two subgenera.

- **Genus *Marmota* - marmots**
  - Subgenus *Marmota*
    - Alpine Marmot *Marmota marmota* found only in Europe in the Alps, northern

### Marmot

**Fossil range:** Late Miocene - Recent



Yellow-bellied Marmot in Yosemite National Park

### Scientific classification

Kingdom: Animalia  
 Phylum: Chordata  
 Class: Mammalia  
 Order: Rodentia  
 Family: Sciuridae  
 Subfamily: Xerinae  
 Tribe: Marmotini  
 Genus: *Marmota*  
 Blumenbach, 1779

### Species

*Marmota baibacina*  
*Marmota bobak*  
*Marmota broweri*  
*Marmota caligata*  
*Marmota camtschatica*  
*Marmota caudata*  
*Marmota flaviventris*  
*Marmota himalayana*  
*Marmota marmota*  
*Marmota menzbieri*  
*Marmota monax*  
*Marmota olympus*  
*Marmota sibirica*  
*Marmota vancouverensis*

- Apennines in Italy, Carpathians, Tatra, and reintroduced in the Pyrenees.
- Gray Marmot or Altai Marmot *Marmota baibacina* Siberia
- Bobak Marmot *Marmota bobak* Central Europe to Central Asia
- Alaska Marmot, Brower's Marmot or Brooks Range Marmot *Marmota broweri* Nearctic
- Black-capped Marmot *Marmota camtschatica* Eastern Siberia
- Long-tailed Marmot, Golden Marmot or Red Marmot *Marmota caudata* Central Asia
- Himalayan marmot or Tibetan Snow Pig *Marmota himalayana* Himalaya
- Menzbier's Marmot *Marmota menzbieri* Central Asia
- Woodchuck, Groundhog, or Whistlepig *Marmota monax* North America
- Tarbagan Marmot, Mongolian Marmot or Tarvaga *Marmota sibirica*, Siberia
- Subgenus *Petromarmota*
  - Hoary Marmot *Marmota caligata* Northwestern North America
  - Yellow-bellied Marmot *Marmota flaviventris* South western Canada, Western United States
  - Olympic Marmot *Marmota olympus* Olympic Peninsula, Washington, USA
  - Vancouver Island Marmot *Marmota vancouverensis* Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada

## Examples of species



A Yellow-bellied Marmot near Princeton, British Columbia



Groundhog, *Marmota monax*



A Hoary Marmot in Mt. Rainier National Park



Alpine Marmot in the Massif des Écrins, southern France.



drawing of Bobak Marmot



Olympic Marmot



Video of adult marmot

# Marmot Day

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Marmot Day** is a community celebration in Owosso, Michigan, occurring on July 25th (or on the following Monday if the 25th falls on a weekend). It is a celebration of all marmots, which include groundhogs, woodchucks, and ground squirrels.

## Confusion with Groundhog Day

Because groundhogs are also marmots, Groundhog Day (which occurs on February 2) has also been referred to as Marmot Day[1]. The Owosso celebration is a distinct event.

## History of Marmot Day

Marmot Day was begun in 2002 in Owosso, Michigan, as a day of celebration for this animal which is usually considered as a pest. A luncheon is traditional as part of the celebration, and marmot jokes are also shared, among other festivities typical of any party or celebration. At 12:45 P.M., a marmot is positioned outside its hole, and if it goes into its hole, legend has it that summer is over; if it does not go into its hole, there will be one more month of summer.

Retrieved from "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmot\\_Day](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marmot_Day)"

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# Menard mad about marmot

By BRIAN O'DONOGHUE  
Frontiersman staff

JUNEAU—A nefarious conspiracy is afoot among powerful members of the Legislature to deny a noble Alaskan its day in the sun.

Because of the conspiracy, Rep. Curt Menard said, next Tuesday the eyes of the nation will once again be drawn to a hole in Pennsylvania, instead of gazing with wonder at the Alaska Zoo.

"It's a disgrace to tourism," the representative declared over the phone from the state capital this week.

Menard's anguish stems from

the Byzantine political fate of House Bill 181, his bold legislation to replace Groundhog Day with an occasion honoring an official state marmot.

House speaker Ben Grussendorf confirmed Menard's dire forecast.

"I don't think we're going to see the marmot's shadow out of committee and onto the floor by the time Groundhog Day rolls around," the speaker said.

Though he originally banished the bill to four committees, Grussendorf denied he is part of a crusade to deny marmots their due.

*(Please see Marmot Back Page)*



## Marmot

(Continued from Front Page)

"I look at what we call local hire, or Alaska preference, and the marmot may well serve that purpose," he said. "I've no personal preference on it. If the bill comes out of committee it's fine with me."

Marmots living this far north are seldom seen this time of year, according to Alaska Zoo director Fammye Seawell. However, Smoke Alarm, the Zoo's senior hoary marmot, is apparently an exception.

"Every few weeks Smoke Alarm sticks his nose out," the zoo director said.

Groundskeepers say Smoke Alarm's restlessness is a matter of personal hygiene. In the halls of the Statehouse, however, the consensus holds the furry weather-vane is actually sniffing out the political situation.

Pressed to explain the legislative logjam, Grussendorf shook his head.

"There's no leverage in the Marmot Bill," he said.

Nonetheless, this much is clear: Rep. John Sund is holding official recognition for Smoke Alarm hostage in his Judiciary Committee.

"We call it the dark hole," Menard said. "There's not a whole lot that comes out of that committee. I've talked to John a couple time about moving it. But he's not too big on the poor little critter."

So, I don't think the marmot's going to stick its head out of the hole," Menard said, chuckling. "I think the speaker's right."

A lot of ribbing goes on about the Marmot Bill, but Menard said he takes it in stride.

"A lot of them are saying it's a joke thing, but there's a long-term value in terms of tourism. I thought it would give some promotion to the zoo. There's a town in Penn where the official Groundhog lives. They built a big tourist industry on that critter alone, selling shirts and all kinds of knickknacks. People go there for souvenirs.

"We always say we're different," he added. "If we're going to be different we don't have to drag all these traditional things up from the Lower 48."

Marmot Day: This is especially beneficial to the valley. Our community is saddled with a lot of embarrassing stereotypes (meth capitol of the state, etc.), which cause young people especially to be disrespectful of our community. Marmots are local and have been here all along; recognizing their value with Marmot Day shows that we in the Valley have some local pride. Without that, it's impossible to maintain a sense of community identity.

Growing up in the Valley, I knew that our strip malls and box stores were nothing special. Independence Mine at Hatcher Pass, populated by marmots, is special. Marmot Day draws attention to the rich cultural resources preserved at Independence Mine and throughout the Talkeetna Mountains. The more we can do to imbue our community with a depth of history, the more the Mat-Su becomes somewhere we can be proud to live. I have watched the most talented members of my high school class leave the Valley with no plans of returning. Things like Marmot Day may be insignificant alone, but when we connect them together, they represent something important. The act of valuing local aspects like gold mines and marmots, or the Palmer Hay Flats and waterfowl, gives my generation a reason to stay-- or to come home again

-Will Elliot, Wasilla



J. P. Riski  
801 Valley St.  
Anchorage, AK  
99504

Dear Senator Menard,

I am willing to support SB58 for naming February 2 "Marmot day" in Alaska for three seasons. First, because it's a special day for Alaska to have fun. Second, because Alaska does not have Ground Hogs; we have Marmots. Last but not least, because Alaska will be the only state in the US that has Marmot day. Obviously I hope that Ground Hog Day gets changed to Marmot Day.

Sincerely,  
Jasmine Riski

Anna Stamm  
6801 Potter  
Highway Dr.  
Anchorage, AK  
99516.

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to support SB 58. I have been going to Arctic Valley my whole life and they celebrate "Merry Marmot Day." On that day a group of people arrange a bunch of activities and contests for the kids. Also we don't have Ground Hogs in Alaska. Anybody can see that this bill should be passed because it would give Alaskans a special day to celebrate.

Sincerely,

Anna Stamm

Joey Aist  
4700 M. Ave.  
Anchorage AK  
March 2, 2009

Dear Senator Menard

I support SB 58 for these reasons. First, groundhogs don't even live in Alaska, but marmots live all over Alaska. Second, marmots are equivalent to groundhogs. Third, a lot of people in Alaska appreciate and like the marmot. Clearly, marmots are Alaska's groundhogs, so a day to honor them makes sense.

Sincerely,  
Joey Aist

P. 2  
10041 Hanley Cir.  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
March 2nd 2009

Dear Senator Menard,

I am writing in support of SB 58. Every year during the spring the Arctic Valley Ski Area hosts a "Merry Marmot Festival" and has many fun activities honoring the Marmot. During the festival many people come to celebrate the Marmot, so why not make it official? The Marmot is very similar to the Groundhog, only Marmots live in Alaska and Groundhogs do not. Having February 2nd be Marmot Day would give Alaska another very unique quality.

Sincerely,  
Ms. Ryan Terry

P. 8  
3256 456789  
Anchorage 4549503  
March 2, 2009

Dear Senator Menard,

I support S B58 to have a "Merry Marmot Day", every February 2<sup>nd</sup>. We should have a "Merry Marmot Day", instead of Ground Hogs' Day because, the Marmot is Alaska's Ground Hog. The kind of Marmot here is the Hoarey Marmot. The Marmot lives here, and the Ground Hog doesn't so why does the Ground Hog get a special day? As you can see the Marmot deserves their own special day.

Sincerely,  
Calena B. Shafer

5000 Valley Brook Cir  
Anchorage, AK 99507  
March 2, 2011

Dear Senator Menard,

I am writing to support SB58. We should have a Marmot day because it would add to the uniqueness of Alaska. Also, we would be able to celebrate a cute, furry mammal, and many people love cute and furry mammals. One more thing is that marmots are afraid of their shadows, like groundhogs, so we will still be able to tell how much longer winter will last, instead of doing something else. All in All, Marmots are the groundhogs of Alaska, so a special day for them makes sense.

Sincerely,  
Yungshu Wong

Dear Senator Memard,

I support your bill and have agreed that the marmot day is a great day to have for Alaska. We need our own special day, like the other states have.

Marmots are cute, kind, and gentle. They help keep Alaska beautiful.

So I believe that the marmot would be a great day for Alaskans.

Sincerely  
Maddie Flores

Dear Senator Menard,

I support S.B. 38. Marmot Day is a good idea because it would be interesting to have a unique animal to celebrate. Second of all, Ground Hogs don't even live here, marmots do. Finally, we should choose an animal that lives here unlike Ground Hogs. To sum it all up, the marmot deserves to have its special day.

Sincerely,  
Clara Brady