



Montana Association of Counties

Serving Montana Counties Since 1909

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DATE: August 31, 2011

TO: Honorable Senator Jim Shockley, Chair and Members
Law & Justice Interim Committee

RE: Request for information - HB 365 – 2011 Legislative Session

FROM: Sheryl Wood, MACo Associate Director

Chair Shockley and members of the Committee:

1) The Montana Association of Counties will be represented on the panel to discuss HB 365 from the 2011 Session by Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County Commissioner, MACo 2nd Vice President, and Chair of the MACo Justice & Public Safety Committee.

2) The Montana Association of Counties has not adopted a position regarding the emergency detention standard compared to involuntary commitment standards. The MACo membership has adopted a policy regarding involuntary commitments which states: *MACo supports the need for the legislature to define serious mental illness in conjunction with the detention of the mentally ill. Further, there is an urgent need for the legislature to provide financial assistance relative to the detention of the serious mentally ill.*

MACo's legislative policy is set by the membership. The MACo membership will be meeting September 25 -30, 2011. We will present this issue to our membership at that time and ask for their guidance.

3) The Montana Association of Counties did not take a position on HB 365 during the 2011 Legislative Session. MACo does not believe the fiscal impact of HB 365, **as written and introduced**, would be of significant concern to counties. Should amendments to the bill be introduced during the Interim that could potentially negatively affect the counties, MACo will re-evaluate their position based on the proposed bill draft and potential fiscal impacts.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and we look forward to working with the Committee throughout the interim on this important issue.