

**HOUSE COMMITTEE  
ON  
AGRICULTURE**

**Senate Bill 51**

**Testimony of Nancy K. Peterson  
Director, Montana Department of Agriculture**

**MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:**

For the record, my name is Nancy K. Peterson, director of the Montana Department of Agriculture. I am here to testify in favor of the passage of Senate Bill 51.

Montana statute requires that commodity dealers be responsible for collecting, reporting and paying an assessment as part of any commodity purchase transaction from producers. This legislation will amend 80-4-421, MCA to clarify that commodity dealers who fail to collect, report or pay a required and authorized agricultural commodity assessment under Title 80, chapter 4 or 11, be subject to suspension or revocation of their commodity dealer license. It will help ensure producer funds are used for the purposes they are collected.

Currently the Agricultural Warehouse, Commodity Dealer and Grain Standards Act does not stipulate how long commodity dealers are required to keep and maintain commodity purchase records. The proposed amendment would require commodity dealers to keep and maintain such records for five years from the date of the transaction. The proposed retention period of five years will coincide with the requirement that grain warehouse operators keep records for five years as stated in 80-4-521, MCA.

We appreciate your consideration and urge your support of Senate Bill 51.