

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3-9-05
HB 173

House Bill 173
March 9, 2005
Presented by Chris Smith
House Appropriations Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Chris Smith, Chief of Staff for Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

Fish, Wildlife and Parks requested House Bill 173 in response to concerns expressed to us by the Division of Disaster and Emergency Services. As explained by the sponsor, the 2003 bill that established the \$0.25 surcharge for search and rescue reverts any unspent balance in the special account set up to hold these funds to the general license account at the end of each fiscal year. This creates a cash flow problem for the Division of Disaster and Emergency Services.

House Bill 173 would retain funds within the search and rescue account for two fiscal years and eliminate the annual "zeroing out" of the account. This will make it easier to administer the account and ensure that funds are available to counties when they are needed for training or search and rescue operations.

FWP asks for you support of HB 173.