

MAR-01-2005 TUE 02:55 PM NE MT JOB SERVICE

406 228 8793

DATE 3-24-05HB 713

TWO RIVERS ECONOMIC GROWTH

A coalition for the future development of Valley County
74 4th Street North, Glasgow, Montana 59230 406-228-3937 phone 406-228-8793 fax

March 1, 2005

Chair Buzzas,
Members of the Appropriations Committee

RE: HB713

In 1968 and repeated in 1981, the Department of Defense closed the Glasgow Air force Base. The effect was the beginning of the out migration of approximately 10,000 residences of Valley County and decline in the economics of the area as well as the state of Montana. Yes, there were efforts made to retain the base for Montana, but not of the caliber or level, they should have been.

Today we know the effects our military bases provide for economic impact, not only on a local area, but also on the state as a whole. We cannot afford to chance the closing of Malmstrom or any other military facility in the state of Montana ever again.

I commend the citizens of the greater Great Falls area for successfully developing the Base Realignment and Closure Committee BRAC and for their efforts in maintaining, not only for Great Falls, but also for Montana, a healthy progressive presence of American military facilities. On behalf of Two Rivers Economic Growth, Inc. and economic development/sustainability, I whole-heartedly support their efforts and offer whatever assistance we can, to make sure we do not ever experience another base closing in Montana.

I strongly encourage the committee to support HB713 by voting for it, as Montana and its communities must do everything in our power to support the concerted efforts of the Great Falls BRAC committee. With the legislature's positive action on HB713, it sends a clear and concise message to the US Department of Defense, that all of Montana supports and appreciates the whole host of missions of the active military and guards in our state.

One community alone cannot change or affect the choices of the US Department of Defense or the US Congress, we in Valley County and NE Montana know that from first hand experience. Please let us not take a chance to have a repeat of 1968 and 1981 again in Montana.

Thank you for your time and service to Montana,

Respectfully,



Larry Mires,
Executive Director