

MEDA

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MONTANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ASSOCIATION

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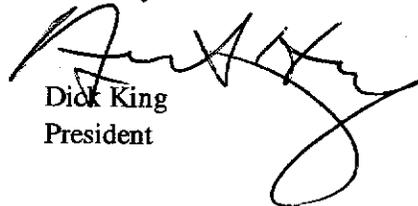
Dear Chairman Buzzas, Vice Chairman Juneau, Vice Chairman Witt and members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) represents professionals working throughout the state. Most of our members are employees of local economic development organizations and are dedicated to helping businesses in their communities create quality jobs for residents of the area. Each of these organizations has different priorities that reflect decisions made by local people, including elected officials at both the municipal and county levels. Over two hundred economic development professionals across the state are members of MEDA. Our statewide organization is dedicated to helping our members become more effective in their efforts to improve local economies.

Eighteen months ago MEDA's members met in Lewistown and developed an agenda for the 2005 Legislature. Since that meeting, we have made several changes to that list, and in the process our organization has decided to support HB 584, sponsored by Representative Harris and now under consideration by your Committee.

Many of us remember "A River Runs Through It," the film dramatization of Norman McLean's great book about a Montana family and their outdoor pursuits. That film was made at a time when movie producers were open to bringing a production crew to Montana, hiring many local individuals to meet their needs, and contracting with local businesses. Sadly, this is no longer the case. Montana is seldom chosen as a location for film production. One clear reason is that we are no longer competitive with other states that provide financial incentives to attract film crews. HB 584 will make us competitive with other states. Given a level playing field, there is no doubt that Montana's unique scenery and wonderful rural and urban settings will win out over other locations as a preferred location for film production. The members of MEDA urge you to give HB 584 a "do pass" recommendation. Let's bring the film industry back to Montana. The economic benefits are clear.

Sincerely,



Dick King
President

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