EXHIBIT 3
DATE 1-27-05
HB 348

January 27, 2005

(H) Business & Labor Committee
Hearing on HB 348

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jenny Haubenreiser and I serve as the Director of Health Promotion at Montana State University in Bozeman. Our program's mission is to address the preventable health risks associated with the college population, which include substance abuse, sexual assault, sexual health, and violence. There is no question that alcohol poses the most serious public health problem on college campuses, which affects not only our students but all members of our community. Alcohol is involved in most all of the preventable harm that occurs among this population. This is true for younger people as well – particularly high school youth, many of whom regularly interact with college students.

I have been involved in this field for over 10 years, during which time I have followed the most current research and data available on underage and high risk drinking prevention. I have received extensive training in the area of alcohol abuse and violence prevention in higher education. The economic, personal, and social costs of this problem have made this work not only important, but federally mandated. The negative consequences of alcohol are far too serious, not only to our students, but their peers, our youth, and our local community.

I also serve as the chair of our Community Alcohol Coalition, which was appointed by the Bozeman City Commission in the Fall of 2003 to address high risk and underage drinking within our community. We have proposed a series of ordinances which have been found effective in reducing underage drinking in other communities – one of which is keg registration. This has become a standard element in nationally recommended strategies to reduce youth access to alcohol (American Medical Association, National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine, MADD, OJJDP, among others).

Beer is the most widely abused form of alcohol among youth and kegs have been shown to be a major source of alcohol for underage drinkers – this requires only one purchase and provides a high volume of inexpensive alcohol (a single 15.5 gallon keg costs around $85 and provides 170 12 oz. servings, which works out to about $.50 a drink). Young drinkers have been found to be particularly sensitive to price, thus reducing access to the cheapest and most plentiful source of alcohol will reduce consumption.

Not only have the citizens of Bozeman expressed support for this measure, Billings has passed this as a city ordinance, and both Kalispell and Missoula are attempting to do so. Local opposition to this is primarily expressed as a concern that this would drive sales to surrounding communities (e.g., people purchasing a keg intended for

minors would have to drive to Belgrade). Clearly passing this bill at the state level is the most efficient way to help reduce access to youth, clean up public lands (where empty kegs are often abandoned), assist law enforcement, protect responsible business owners, and help create safer communities. Keg registration, especially when combined with other strategies to reduce access and increase enforcement, is an effective means of prevention.

I am also a member of the Gallatin Chapter of MADD and am here today to speak on behalf of this organization – keg registration is part of our package of priority legislation, which form a highly effective strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm. Currently 24 states have a keg registration law. These laws are effective in reducing underage drinking and the associated consequences, namely drinking and driving or riding with an intoxicated driver. Passage of HB 348 will assist the many communities in Montana currently trying to do this at the city level. This is a critical opportunity for the state to protect not only our youth, but the communities where we all reside.

Sincerely,

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- Nationally, in 1999 there were 10.4 million drinkers between the ages of 12 and 20. Of this group, 6.8 million engaged in binge drinking. Large quantities of cheap alcohol, which is what kegs provide, encourages binge drinking by those that can be most damaged by it: our youth. *(1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services.)*

- More teens die from an alcohol overdose or drunk driving crashes than from all other causes combined. Keg registration is a proven way to reduce underage access to cheap alcohol.

- Easy access to alcohol at an early age (age 18) is associated with higher rates of drinking later (ages 21 – 25). Reducing underage access to alcohol not only will reduce injuries and other problems associated with drinking but may have beneficial effects for these individuals during adulthood, and reduce the long-run costs of alcohol to society. *(O'Malley, and Wagenaar, A.C.: The effects of minimum drinking age laws on alcohol use, related behaviors and traffic crash involvement among American youth 1976 – 1987. J. Stud Alcohol 52:478-491, 1991).*

- Kegs have been shown to be a major source of alcohol for underage drinkers. The same report indicates that the major factors in underage attendance at keg parties are low price of alcohol and the lack of adult monitoring. *(Wagenaar et al: Where and how adolescents obtain alcoholic beverages. Public Health Reports: v108 n4: 459-464, 1993)*

- Keg registration will provide a way to hold adults legally or financially responsible for providing alcohol to underage youth. Keg registration will make adults think twice before purchasing kegs and allowing underage youth to drink from them.

- Keg registration policies are widely supported by the public. More than four out of five Americans believe that registration of beer kegs should be required as a way to reduce underage drinking. *(E. Harwood et al: Youth Access to Alcohol Survey Summary Report. University of Minnesota Alcohol Epidemiology Program, 1998)*

- Retailers may argue that keg registration in their community will cause keg buyers to go to communities or states that do not have keg registration. Experience with other areas that have instituted keg regulations has shown that purchasers who are over 21 and don't intend to serve underage drinkers will not drive out of their way to avoid keg registration.

- In a recent Canadian study, a majority of youth who attended outdoor parties at which alcohol was present not only drank (71.5%), but also drank and drove (63.5%). Another 16.1% rode with a drinking-driver. Reducing underage access to kegs, a major source of high volume, low price beer, will reduce underage consumption and drunk driving, making our community safer for all of us. *(Stoduto, G. et al: Adolescents, bush parties and drinking-driving. J. Stud Alcohol v59 n5: 544-549, 1998.)*

- Almost 20 percent of all traffic crashes involving a driver under age 21 involve alcohol. The costs of medical care, emergency services, work loss and property damage for these crashes in over $7 billion nationally per year. Reducing even a fraction of these costs will easily offset any administrative costs from keg registration. *(Levy, D et al: Costs of Underage Drinking. Report prepared for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. 1999.)*

- In 1994, there were ten fatal and 40,000 nonfatal cases of alcohol poisoning among youth in the United States. In addition to the personal toll this takes on the youth and their families, youth alcohol poisoning costs this country approximately $10 million in medical care and $16 million in lost

work every year. *(Levy, D. et al: Costs of Underage Drinking. Report prepared for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. 1999.)*

- Instituting keg regulations does not mean that we are eliminating the responsibility of underage drinkers for their own actions. But it is also against the law to sell or provide alcohol to those under 21. Keg Registration makes it easier to enforce these existing laws, and sends a message that our community does not condone buying beer for minors.

- The health effects of underage drinking are significant and can be irreversible. Research has shown that the brain continues developing until about age 21. Studies indicate that heavy, regular drinking can damage or destroy brain cells involved in learning and memory. We need to do our part to reduce high-risk drinking among young people. Reducing underage access to kegs is an important step. *(American Academy of Pediatrics, 1998; USA Today report, 10/18/2000)*

- Younger drinkers have been shown to be especially sensitive to alcohol prices – the more expensive the alcohol, the less they consume. Because kegs are a prime source of cheap alcohol, reducing access to kegs will decrease youth consumption, even if it cannot eliminate it. *(Coate, D., Grossman, M.: The effect of alcoholic beverage prices and legal drinking ages on youth alcohol use. Journal of Law and Economics, 31(1): 145-171, 1988)*

- The alcohol industry has indicated that they want to be responsible providers of alcoholic beverages to those 21 and older. Keg registration makes retailers a part of the solution to underage drinking. It also assists them in proving that their keg sales were done legally.

Data compiled by AMA's Office of Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse office, Policy Solutions
www.alcoholpolicysolutions.net