EXHIBIT 2
DATE 2.16.05
HB HJ 24

Testimony for HJ 24 (Commemoration of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial)
By Hal Stearns, noted Lewis and Clark Historian

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, for the record, I am Hal Stearns. I am a life-long Montanan and educator. I have taught thousands of our high school and college students over the years. Much of my teaching focused on Montana, its history, its place in America and the world. I always taught by emphasizing the richness of our story, our peoples, our unique character, the amazing ways Montanans would deal with the long odds, whether drought or extreme heat or cold or long distances to market. I always noted the way Montana stands out among the states. It has a magic, a special air about it. We are the last frontier, the Big Sky, the place others aspire to be or admire from afar.

Today, I travel Montana guiding tourists, speaking to groups far and wide. So much of my relationship with any of these audiences revolves around our waterways and our mountains, our plains and isolated ranges.

Thus, HJ 24 means a lot to me. I note this resolution as a way of recognizing our wonders: our landscapes and waters. The Lewis and Clark Expedition Commemoration is a special time to acknowledge the precious things that make us Montana. The Corps of Discovery noted 122 new animals and 178 new plants, unknown to the Euro-American world. They saw lands and waters never seen by White America. They met tribes, each unique and special. So much of what they did was within Montana's borders.

My many audience members truly feel at the end of our gatherings that Montana is the wonder of wonders.

Committee members, this is a wonderful resolution. I highly endorse it and hope you do as well. Thank you.