

## DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

### Funding for Division of Criminal Investigation Drug Task Forces

#### Background

The Division of Criminal Investigation (DCI) receives 75% of its funding for drug task forces from the Montana Board of Crime Control through the Byrne Grant program. DCI operates grant-funded drug task forces in Butte, Great Falls, Havre and Miles City. This federal funding also funds one attorney position in the Attorney General's Office and two forensic chemist positions in the Forensic Science Division.

The Montana Board of Crime Control has announced that there will be a major reduction in Byrne funding in FY 2006. To date, no federal guidelines have been distributed explaining how changes in the program will be implemented. Lack of federal guidelines on program changes creates funding uncertainty for state-level positions. Seventeen state employees engaged in drug enforcement activities are funded through this source, placing these positions – and statewide drug enforcement efforts in Montana – in jeopardy.

#### Need for DCI Narcotics Agents

Production, distribution and abuse of drugs continue to be major problems in communities throughout Montana. The highly addictive drug methamphetamine has created a statewide drug epidemic, requiring a concerted effort from law enforcement, the court system, and the prevention and treatment communities.

As a vital component of this battle, law enforcement must maintain its level of commitment against illegal drugs. DCI narcotics investigators play a unique role in the law enforcement arena in Montana. These narcotics agents:

- act in an undercover capacity, supporting local law enforcement agencies in areas where local police are known to the public and cannot act in as undercover agents,
- are certified in responding to meth labs and initiate the clean-up process, and
- provide drug enforcement training to local law enforcement personnel statewide.

Their loss would seriously undermine drug enforcement efforts throughout Montana.

#### Funding Request

DCI requests that the legislature fund these 17 positions and some operating expenses associated with drug enforcement efforts from the general fund.

	FY 2006	FY 2007
Current level funding	\$716,999	\$717,016
New proposal – DP-17	\$37,995	\$37,797
<b>Total general fund request</b>	<b>\$754,994</b>	<b>\$754,813</b>