EXHIBIT 12
DATE 1/10/2005
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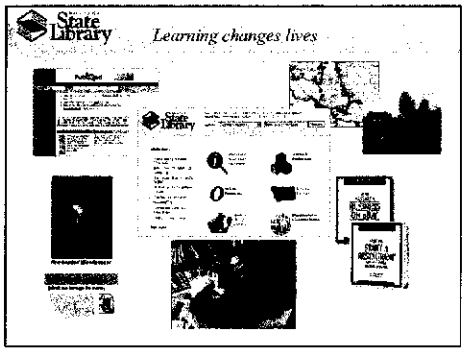

Representative Franklin, members of the Committee, I want to thank you again for your time and consideration of these State Library issues, as they affect all Montanans. Remember that Libraries are a key part of the education system. Libraries provide the place and the services for lifelong learning. Remember that the world of information and libraries is changing and the Montana State Library staff are consistently stepping up to meet the challenges of change very effectively.

So much of what we do is based in things that we fear might make your eyes glaze over when you must sit here and listen to me go on about them - words such as shared catalogs, interlibrary loans, information technology, GIS, and magazine databases. There's no passion in GIS. There's no passion in massive on-line databases.

But there is passion in finding the health information you need -- via our magazine database -- about a diagnosis you or a loved one just received and don't fully understand. There is passion in finding out -- through NRIS -- that the property you wanted to buy is located five miles downstream from a Superfund site.

There is passion in learning -- using our Natural Heritage Program's on-line field guides -- about the bird you saw on your last hike and hearing its song.

There is passion in finding the information you need, with the help of your librarian, to start your own business, or to embark on a dream career.

There is passion in seeing the sheer joy your child experiences when hearing a new book at story hour.

The end result of what we do, and who is affected, and why what we do is valuable to those end users, is what really matters. How we get there still matters, but it mostly matters to us – and to you members of this committee, as you consider our budget for the coming biennium.

I extend an invitation to you to visit the State Library any time. We'd love the opportunity to spend more time showing you what we do. We hope you will accept the Library Association's invitation to join us at the State Library on the 31st. You have a hard-working staff at your State Library. Please support the State Library's budget so we can continue to do great work.

I would be happy to respond to any questions you might have. Thank you.