



EXHIBIT 14  
DATE 01/07/2005  
HB 2

# COUNTY OF RICHLAND

Office Of  
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

406-433-1706 FAX 406-433-3731

Chairman-Don Stepler

Member-Henry T. Johnson

Member-Mark Rehbein

Chairman Ripley and Members of the Committee

Richland County would like to go on record seeking increased funding in the next biennium to the Montana Coal Board. We feel that more impact funds are going to be needed to adequately address the funding requests due to increased activity in the Coal industry.

Richland County would support the return of the Coal Board Funding to the 2003 biennium level and the Department of Commerce's original request. The Montana Coal Board, in our opinion, has been severely under funded in the last several biennium's to meet the increased needs of the impacted areas.

Richland County has impact requests that have been put on hold because of the decrease in funding levels for the Coal Board. These issues have not gone away, but have become more of a problem with time and delay, such as the resurfacing of County Road 107. This road leads to the Westmoreland Coal mine, west of Savage and is heavily used by loaded trucks hauling coal. Out of respect for other impacted areas, we have delayed work on this road, but we are getting to the point of having no other options available to address this problem.

The funding for the Montana Coal Board needs to be set at an acceptable level to address these basic needs, in the areas where the Coal is creating the most impact, as well as other areas who are allowed access to these funds.

Richland County would respectfully request that this Committee increase the funding to the Montana Coal Board.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely;

Richland County Commissioners

Don Stepler  
Mark Rehbein  
Henry Johnson