

**MONTANA**  
Department of Commerce

DATE 02/18/05  
HB 2

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

301 S. Park Ave. \* P.O. Box 200501 \* Helena, Montana 59620-0501  
Phone 406-841-2700 \* Fax: 406-841-2701 \* TDD: 406-841-2702 \* <http://commerce.state.mt.us/>

February 17, 2005

**Joint Appropriations Subcommittee for Natural Resources and Commerce**

Rep. Rick Ripley, Chairman  
Sen. Ken Hanson, Vice-Chairman  
Rep. Rosie Buzzas  
Rep. John Musgrove  
Rep. Walt McNutt  
Sen. Greg Barkus  
Sen. Bob Hawks

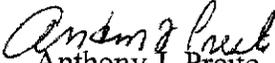
Dear Representative Ripley and Committee Members:

I am writing to you in order to acknowledge and confirm the information you received in your committee yesterday related to the Coal Tax Shared Account from this agency. I was not informed nor were my managers informed that your committee had requested information on 3% and 6% potential cuts. However, I do take full responsibility for this development.

I want to express my sincere apology for this unfortunate circumstance and tell you that this agency has a long tradition of working cooperatively with the legislature and its staff. I and the other members of our agency who appeared before you early in January were very thankful and appreciative of the committee's reception to the important work that we do in delivering legislative programs to the citizens of Montana.

Please know that I would never ignore or minimize the importance of the work that your committee undertakes. I hope that you will accept my commitment to make sure that this type of unfortunate incident never happens again.

Sincerely,

  
Anthony J. Preite  
Director