

EXHIBIT 3  
DATE 1-13-05  
HB 75



**Missoula County Board of Commissioners  
Testimony in support of  
HB 75  
January 13, 2005**

The Missoula County Board of Commissioners fully supports HB 75, granting local governments the right of first refusal to purchase private water system should one be offered for sale.

We believe that public ownership of water systems is, without question, in the public interest since the quality and supply of our water is quintessentially a matter of public health, safety and economic well-being.

★ Additionally, the Missoula City-County Health Department is in the process of getting away from privately maintained systems when permitting new ones due to concerns about maintenance and enforcement. Missoula County's Public Works Director has had problems in the past with private water system operators in getting them to fix deficiencies within County rights-of-way. He prefers that new development have a publicly maintained water system as a condition of using public rights-of-way.

This bill gives local governments throughout the state, the ability to acquire private water systems that have been offered for sale at fair market value. We urge your support for this valuable legislation.