

EXHIBIT 4  
DATE 1-25-05  
HB 247

**STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF HB 247**

**Ethel H. Pelton  
280 West Rosebud Rd.  
Fishtail, Montana 59028**

My name is Ethel Pelton. I am here today to speak in favor of HB 247. I live in the Fishtail School District that was included in the Beartooth Park & Recreation District. The Civic Club in Absarokee decided to create this Park & Recreation District. It includes two other elementary school districts in the area besides the Absarokee school district. Residents in these outlying areas live as far away as 35 miles from Absarokee. This Park District was basically formed to operate Absarokee's swimming pool, ballpark and other park. The Absarokee residents are the ones who are using these facilities.

The Absarokee Civic Club made the decision to create this Park & Recreation District. Legal notices appeared in the paper Dec. 26 and Jan 2. The hearing was set for Jan.7, 2003. At this hearing only the Absarokee citizens testified because they were the only ones who knew what this was all about. The rural people were not privileged to the same information the insiders had. This was followed by a mail ballot election. Many electors did not know what the purpose of this ballot was when they received it. The results of the 1349 ballots mailed out were 498 for and 341 against. That makes 37% that voted in favor.

The rural areas now found themselves part of the Beartooth Park & Recreation District. They immediately started a petition drive to withdraw territory from this district. There were approximately 67% of the qualified electors of this territory that signed this petition. On August 1, 2003 the Stillwater County Clerk & Recorder confirmed signatures on our petition were sufficient to meet requirement in MCA 7-16-2441. It was almost a year later on June 30, 2004 when the Park Board finally held a hearing. At this hearing 143 people appeared in person or by written statement in support of altering the boundaries and requested the Commissioners to call an election on the question. Twenty people appeared in person or by written statement requesting the boundaries be left unchanged.

The Park Board held a meeting on July 13, 2004 to render a decision. With total disregard for the overwhelming testimony at the public hearing in support of altering the district boundaries four of the five commissioners voted to deny the petition. We were not given an opportunity to vote on this issue. This is the reason that I request that you pass HB 247.