

EXHIBIT 7
DATE 1-25-05
HB 247

Statement Of Support House Bill No. 247

Peggy Ferster
2540 Hwy 78
Absarokee, Mt. 59001

My name is Peggy Ferster I am a rancher south of Absarokee, Mt. I'm here today to give support to the passage of HB 247, and too state some of my concerns.

My number one concern: In Montana Code 7-16-2441 when a group of people meet all of the requirements to alter the boundaries or dissolve a district, it is left up to the Park Commission to decide whether the issue should be brought to a vote of the people with in the withdrawal district. Voting to remove property from a park district reduces revenue and goes against everything the Park Commission is working for and the right to vote will most likely be denied no matter how overwhelming support to reduce or dissolve the district may be. This denies the most precious constitutional right, the right to vote. This bill could correct this grievous injustice.

My second concern: The amendment, HB 247, as introduced has left intact the 10% petition signature requirement to enact a district. This is a very low number and is very easy to achieve. The amendment however will increase the petition signature requirement to alter a district from 15% to 40%. This is an unfair discrepancy in percentages. I would hope that you could make these numbers more equitable.

✓My third concern: In HB 247, the territory proposed to be withdrawn must be "compact and contiguous to a boundary of the district". This language might be discriminatory to people inside the boundary of a park district that wish to petition to withdraw.

I hope that you will take the time to consider my concerns and pass HB 247.

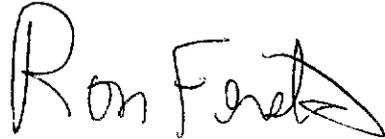
Thank You

Peggy Ferster

Americans most precious right is the right to vote. No local governing board should have the ability to deny this basic right. HB247 also requires the board to hold timely hearings and when and how electors can vote. These changes are essential for fairness in the system.

Two things in this bill need to be addressed, however. The language in paragraph [1] “compact and contiguous to a border of the district” places serious and restrictive limitations on the ability of landowners to petition to withdraw property from a Parks District. In paragraph 2 [b], the 40% petition requirement is excessively high as anyone who has ever carried a petition can readily attest, especially when only a 10% petition signature requirement is all that is needed to initiate the creation of a Parks District. I urge you to pass this bill but request your consideration in addressing these two concerns.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Ferrel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a stylized "F".