



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 2.18.05
HB 675

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Mr. Jim Peterson
Chair, House Natural Resources Committee
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59620

Feb 18, 2005

Chairman Peterson and members of the Committee,

The Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) would like to express its opposition to HB 675. RMEF is an international wildlife conservation organization with a membership of over 150,000 members, including nearly 12,000 Montanans, that include conservationists, landowners, hunters, and volunteers, that all support our mission which is to ensure the future of elk, other wildlife and their habitat. The organization's top priority has never changed, offsetting habitat loss which is the principle threat to elk country in Montana and across the West. Our efforts in conserving habitat include conservation easements and we currently hold 15 easements in Montana.

HB 675 proposes to amend Montana's conservation easement statute in a way that would take away the ability of land trusts, including RMEF, to enforce the terms of conservation easements. This is a radical change that would completely disable a law that has worked well for the thirty years that it has been in place in Montana. RMEF is proud of the partnerships that it has with its conservation easement property owners and works together with them in a cooperative fashion in the stewardship of the easements.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on HB 675 and urge you to vote against it.

Sincerely,
Jim Gladen
Jim Gladen
Vice-President of Lands & Conservation Department
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation