EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3.9.05
SB 107

550 7th Lane NE
Fairfield, MT 59436
Phone (406) 467-3776
January 5, 2005

Dear Director Peterson:

My name is Michael Konen, and I am a resident and farmer in rural Fairfield. I am thirty-four years old, grew up on my family's farm, and have been managing this farm since 1998. For approximately five years, I have also been involved with the Voluntary Advisory Committee that was organized to address the problem of the agricultural chemical Assert (Imazamethabenz methyl) being found in the Fairfield area's groundwater. Being both a farmer and resident of Fairfield made me concerned with this discovery. I am writing this letter to state my support for Senate Bill 107 that would amend the Montana law that sets forth requirements for management plans being set up when chemicals such as Assert are found in groundwater.

When Assert was first found to be in the Fairfield area's groundwater, it was said to meet three of the five criteria that required a management plan to be established. When our Voluntary Advisory Committee was organized, our purpose was to be involved with the formation of this management plan. It was hard to know what to do because the law required some sort of action, yet the level of detection was so small that drastic measures such as banning the use of Assert were out of the question. Such a ban could have had major economic impacts on agriculture production in Fairfield. It was decided that the most practical approach was to educate the farmers and custom chemical applicators about the problem and then set up educational programs that would basically ensure that proper chemical usage and handling was occurring. Since the implementation of the Specific Management Plan for Assert, the detection levels in groundwater have not increased. Whether this is a result of the Plan that was set in place is undeterminable, but from attending the educational programs that occurred due to our plan, I learned some valuable practices and techniques that have improved my ability to apply chemicals properly. Thus I believe our educational approach was effective.

My reason for supporting Senate Bill 107 is it would allow more flexibility in approaching the groundwater problems. These approaches could be more cost-effective and would allow more than one chemical to be included in the same Management Plan. Assert is not a unique chemical. The same geological conditions that allow Assert to enter Fairfield's groundwater allow other chemicals to also enter our groundwater. In my opinion, Senate Bill 107 would be an improvement to current the Montana law.

Sincerely,
Michael Konen