

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**Michael A. Murray                      Anita L. Varone                      Ed Tinsley**

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March 8, 2005

Representative Hal Jacobson  
House State Administration Committee

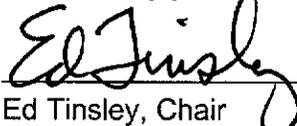
Dear Representative Jacobson,

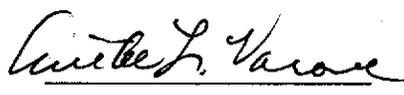
The purpose of this letter is to offer Lewis and Clark County's **support** of Senate Bill 98 – Montana Land Information Act. This bill is not about generating revenue for the counties. This is a bill for maintaining GIS layers in standardized and cooperative effort that benefits all of Montana.

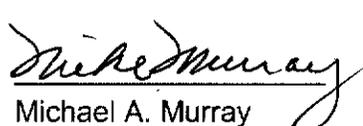
The counties will receive 25% off the top because they are collecting the fees. The 75% that goes "to the state" is not restricted to state use. The 75% goes to a fund for REDISTRIBUTION, through a granting process that is open to ALL Montana agencies (cities, counties, special districts, state agencies, tribes, etc.) The granting process will foster cooperative projects that generally benefit all of Montana. Local governments will have a voice in the granting process, and distribution of those funds. Counties will have representatives on the council that recommends the distribution of the 75%. Therefore, a county could potentially receive more funds on top of the 25%, if they can make a cogent argument that what they are doing is for the greater good. The work that will be done with that 75% will benefit counties even if the money goes to other agencies. The cost savings due to economy of scale are tremendous in GIS data development and maintenance. That is why partnerships are so important.

The counties are major players on the GIS scene in Montana, but we are not the only players. Nor are we the most important because there is no single agency or group of agencies that is most important in GIS. The success of each of us depends on the success of all of us collectively. Montana is considered a leader in GIS throughout the nation. We got to this point because of the partnerships of local, state, federal, tribal, and private sectors.

Respectfully yours

  
Ed Tinsley, Chair

  
Anita L. Varone

  
Michael A. Murray