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EXHIBIT 17
DATE 2.16.05
HB 584

February 16, 2005

Dear Honorable Members of the Taxation Committee,

I am writing to you as a full-time resident of Montana and one who has a vested interest in the economic health and welfare of our state.

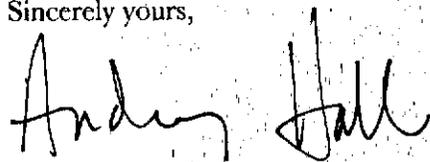
I support the HB584 "Big Sky to the Big Screen" bill for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, film dollars affect my small business directly, and I've seen those dollars positively impact other Montana residents and locally owned companies. I've worked on projects that have brought real dollars to real people including neighborhood businesses: restaurants, motels, caterers, hardware stores, clothing stores, gas stations, farms and ranches, property management companies, rental companies, just to name a few. Furthermore, these dollars enter a wide range of Montana communities both large and small including ones in eastern Montana. Additionally, the fact that the film industry is sustainable, having little or no environmental impact adds to the appeal of HB584.

On a fiscal scale, the average earning opportunity for a couple of days of work on a commercial or feature is nearly equal to what the state pays in welfare to a family of three for an entire month! Production companies hire anywhere from fifteen to two hundred people for one day to over a year. These professional jobs pay well, even to the "low men on the totem pole."

The key to the economic success of this industry in Montana is consistency of projects coming to our state and not places like New Mexico or over the border to Alberta and British Columbia. These places have aggressive economic development strategies and incentives. They have benefited from millions of dollars of film revenue. They capitalize and secure potential business dollars that could be Montana's. My own pocket book has felt the loss again and again when Montana's competitors win the bid. As a professional photographer, production manager and location scout, I have witnessed the "run-away" projects on a regular basis. I know from first-hand experience that many companies who consider Montana initially, ultimately take their projects elsewhere, not because Montana can't provide the locations, equipment and crew, but the economic policies of our state can't compete on a "bottom line" basis.

Economic development means living wages and consistency of work. The incentive package would foster both. Other states that have adopted similar measures have reaped enormous economic rewards. It is time for Montana to do the same.

Sincerely yours,



Audrey S. Hall