

February 11, 2005

Chairman Toole  
Members of the Senate Energy & Telecommunications Committee

I am writing to voice my personal support and the support of the Wheatland County Board of Commissioners for the Governor's Renewable Energy Standard bill.

Montana ranks among the top five states for wind potential. Unfortunately, it lags far behind other western and Midwestern states in the development of this valuable resource. The Renewable Energy Standard bill would be a move toward changing that picture.

The bill would require utilities to purchase a certain percentage of renewable power as is currently being done in 18 states plus Washington, DC. The bill proposes that Montana utilities gradually phase in the use of renewal energy until 2015 when they would be obtaining 15% of their energy from wind, solar, biomass or other geothermal sources.

A second vital component of The Renewable Energy Standard bill is that it would require a mix of small, locally-owned projects be included. This would stimulate the economies of rural, eastern Montana such as ours in Wheatland County that have struggled for years to survive. The economic benefits of a renewal energy industry would truly be a *windfall* for our rural communities.

The dual need for renewable energy and for economic development for Montana's rural communities is at an all time high. The solution for this problem is still blowing in the wind and it's time to do something about it. By supporting this bill you will be helping Montana, its rural communities and each of us citizens take a forward step into the future.

As a representative of a rural county and a believer in clean, renewable energy, I urge you to support the Renewable Energy Standard bill.

Sincerely,

**Richard Moe, Chairman**  
**Wheatland County Board of Commissioners**