SENATE FINANCE AND CLAIMS
EXHIBIT NO. 1
DATE 3-16-05
BILL NO. HB119

House Bill 119
March 16, 2005
Presented by Jim Kropp
Senate Finance and Claims Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, for the record I am Jim Kropp, Chief of Enforcement for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

This bill is requested by FWP to make permanent existing funding sources for boating facility improvements and County Water Safety programs.

The funds generated in this program are from the registration of motorboats in the counties throughout Montana. Of the county funds generated, 20% is allocated to FWP for public motorboat facilites around the state. Typical projects include boat ramps, docks, boat trailer parking areas, latrines, and similar facilites. These funds are allocated to various FWP and city/county grant projects based upon the recommendations and oversight of a five-member Citizens' Boating Advisory Committee. Funding available for motorboat improvement projects is approximately $450,000 per biennuim, and is often the stateside match for additional federal funding.

The County Water safety contracts authorize counties to assist FWP with water safety and education in their respective counties. FWP administers grants passed to the counties as a 50/50 match for on the water administrative patrols. The matching funds assist county sherriff offices to patrol waters in their counties for boating violations and related public safety concerns. Currently there are three counties, Cascade, Carbon, and Lake, that are in the program and would like to continue contracting with FWP. Several other counties have recently expressed interest in joining an hopefully can join if this bill is passed.

This bill is beneficial to all of our water recreationists throughout this state. I urge your support of HB 119.