SENATE FINANCE AND CLAIMS
EXHIBIT NO. 15
DATE 4-5-05
BILL NO. HB 540

Testimony for Joe Mazurek
Senate Finance and Claims Committee
April 5, 2005

Chairman Cooney, members of the committee for the record my name is Joe Mazurek. Along with Betty Babcock, I am the co-chair of the steering committee for the new Montana History Center. I stand here today in support of a financial commitment on the part of the state of Montana for this project.

People are judged by the opportunities set before them and how they respond to those opportunities. Our courage as a people is evident in the manuscripts, photos, art, and buildings of this great state. Many of those testaments to courage are entrusted to the Montana Historical Society for their care. Montanans have donated their most treasured family possessions to a facility that can no longer house them; let alone display them. The current home of the Montana Historical Society has served us well but our collective past has simply outgrown it.

There is an opportunity just a few blocks north of that facility calling all of us to action. We do not have time to wait, we need the courage to move forward today. We will always have financial concerns and we will always have road blocks; sometimes, we need to just move forward. This is one of those times.

I am asking you as committee members to have the courage to take this once in a life time opportunity. Stand up like those of us in this room and say our history is too important to continue to box up and stack away.

Provide the seed money and allow Montanans the opportunity to do the rest.

Thank you for your time and support.