

MEDA

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Montana Economic Developers Association

April 4, 2005

Senator Mike Cooney, Chairman
 Senate Finance and Claims Committee
 Montana State Capitol
 Helena, MT
 59620-0500

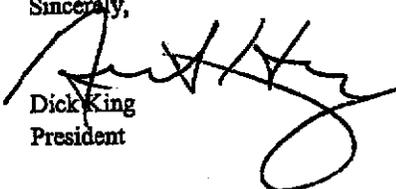
Dear Senator Cooney and members of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee:

The Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) represents more than 200 economic development professionals that work throughout the State. Most of our members work for local economic development organizations that are supported by private sector businesses and local governmental entities. We all have different priorities, but we share a strong common interest. Montana can build a better economy for its citizens.

To meet the needs of its membership, MEDA's primary purpose is to provide training and networking opportunities to increase the professional skills of our members. Building local economic development capacity is a proven strategy to help businesses create high quality jobs and assist communities to meet critical infrastructure needs that are the foundation of business growth. HB 249 would enable the State of Montana to become a more effective partner with local economic development efforts. When MEDA's membership is successful and job creation occurs, the State benefits directly from the increased income tax revenue. HB 249 would establish the Big Sky Economic Development Fund within the Coal Tax Trust Fund. Passage of this bill would reflect a long-term commitment by the State of Montana to locally based economic development efforts.

MEDA strongly urges your support for HB 249.

Sincerely,


 Dick King
 President

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