

Exhibit No. 1
Date 3-9-05
Bill No. HB 232

MONTANA MAGISTRATES' ASSOCIATION POSITION ON HB232

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I regret that a conflict has prevented me from appearing before you in support of HB232. Mr. Oppedahl has very kindly agreed to convey this message to you on our behalf.

Montana's judges of courts of limited jurisdiction have been pursuing automation of their court activities since 1988 - some courts before that date. That pursuit often has been frustrating. Initial enactment of the automation surcharge brought substantial progress in court automation. However, the two-year sunset provision attached to the automation surcharge has made it difficult for the Court Administrator's Office to consistently plan and complete automation of court functions. At present, the Administrator's office has purchased an excellent court automation product - one designed in response to court officials, supported by our State's courts of limited jurisdiction and used very successfully by those courts. However, the product has not been installed as yet in all qualifying courts. Continued installation, maintenance and enhancement of that product requires a predictable revenue stream. HB232 will enhance that revenue stream and will extend the sunset date of the automation surcharge well into the future. For these reasons, the Montana Magistrates' Association supports HB232 and encourages you to recommend its enactment.

Thank you.



Ted Clack
Registered Lobbyist
Montana Magistrates' Association