**Flathead City-County Health Department**
1035 First Ave. West Kalispell, MT 59901
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Community Health Services
751-8110 FAX 751-8111
Environmental Health Services
751-8130 FAX 751-8131
Reproductive Health Services
751-8150 FAX 751-8151
Home Health Services
751-6800 FAX 751-6807
WIC Services
751-8170 FAX 751-8171

Senate Local Govt. Comm.
Exhibit No. 1
Date March 8, 2005
Bill No. HB218

January 19, 2005

Bernie Olson, Member
House Local Government Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Capital Station
Helena MT 59620

Re: HB218

Dear Representative Olson,

The Flathead City-County Board of Health supports House Bill 218 which generally revises the laws on creating mosquito control districts. The current laws that govern the creation of mosquito control districts are cumbersome and time consuming and do not allow the flexibility required to minimize the emerging public health threat posed by mosquitoes.

As we Montanans are now acutely aware, the West Nile Virus carried by mosquitoes poses a significant health threat to human and equine populations. The restrictive district creation laws do not allow communities the flexibility required to combat the vector of this lethal virus. Prior to the introduction of this virus in the United States, mosquitoes were more or less a nuisance in this part of the country and controlling mosquitoes was a matter of convenience. This is not the case any more.

We wholeheartedly support House Bill 218 and hope you will also. If we can be of further assistance moving this bill forward, please contact me at 751-8103.

Sincerely,

Joseph W. Russell, R.S., M.P.H.
Health Officer