



JOHN ENGEN
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2/15/07
HB 516

February 14, 2007

Chairman John Sinrud, and
Members of the House Appropriations Committee
House Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Sent via email and FAX to (406) 444-4825

Chairman Sinrud and Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

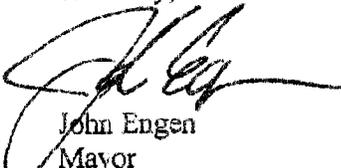
The City of Missoula would like to go on record in support of Representative Hands' House Bill 516, providing for the transfer of \$5 million from the state general fund to the affordable housing revolving loan account on July 1, 2007, and on July 1, 2008.

Currently, the lack of workforce and low-income housing across our state presents significant barriers to the economic growth of Montana families and communities. Average household incomes in Montana have increased by 10% in the last five years while average housing costs have increased by more than 50%. Employers are experiencing the difficulty of recruiting a quality workforce in communities where housing is increasingly unaffordable. In many instances, teachers, police officers, and essential health care workers can no longer afford to live in the communities in which they work, and seniors and people with disabilities are experiencing more and more difficulty in finding safe, affordable housing in their home communities.

House Bill 516 represents a sound investment in Montana's economic future. It is anticipated that every dollar in the affordable housing revolving loan account will leverage an additional \$9 from other public and private sources. A \$10 million investment in the affordable housing revolving loan account will yield 1,000 housing units, 250 jobs, and \$14.5 million in wages for Montanans.

Affordable housing is critical to our state's present and future, and the City of Missoula encourages you to support House Bill 516.

Sincerely,



John Engen
Mayor

cc: The Missoula Delegation
Alec Hanson, Director, League of Cities and Towns