MISSOULA COUNTY

MISSOULA CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION
301 WEST ALDER
MISSOULA, MONTANA 59802-4123
(406) 523-4755 FAX # (406) 523-4781

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 3-9-07
HB 148

Thursday, March 08, 2007

House Human Services Committee
RE: HB 148

Chairman John Sinrud,

Chairman Sinrud and members of the committee,

My name is Jim Carlson. I am director of Environmental Health at the Missoula City-County Health Department. I am speaking on behalf of the Missoula Health Department and the Health Department directors of Missoula, Yellowstone, Gallatin, Flathead, Lewis and Clark, Silver Bow, and Cascade Counties.

House Bill 148 would raise the fees for swimming pool licensure to cover the actual costs of the inspection and compliance programs. Currently Missoula County does not inspect its pools and spas because the license program generates inadequate fees. However, pursuant to other sections of this law local health can choose to take over the inspections from DPHHS and receive a portion of the license fee money.

Missoula County has 52 facilities that contain 93 pools and spas requiring a license. Under the current fee schedule these licenses generate $3,125 dollars per year in revenue. If Missoula County were to take over the inspection and compliance program from the State, we would get 85% of the fee money which would be $2,656 dollars per year. However, our costs for conducting the inspection and compliance program are projected to be $11,875 dollars per year. Under the current fee structure we would loose approximately $9,219 and assume added liability for administering the pool inspection and compliance program. We simply can't afford to take on this program under the current fees structure. This bill would increase the fees collected in Missoula County to $12,950 per year and Missoula would be eligible for 85% equaling $11,007 if we choose to take over the program. I can tell you that if this bill passes as drafted, we will recommend to our board to take over the pool program in Missoula County.

The underlying public health reason for this program is vital to our mission of protecting the public health. Pools can be the source of infection of many diseases including ear infections, cryptosporidium, giardia, and many other diarrhea illnesses. Spas are often a source of skin infections and can be a source of legionnaire's disease and some of its close relatives.

In the past few years Missoula has experienced outbreaks involving pools and spas. We would like to have better response and control over these situations. Please make local control and more timely response a financial option for the counties. Please pass HB 148 as drafted.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Carlson

Jim Carlson, R.S
Director of Environmental Health