EXHIBIT 1
DATE 3-12-07
SB 339

March 12, 2007
Tony Kloker, Superintendent
Montana City School District #27
Testimony on Senate Bill 339
House Local Government

For the record I am Tony Kloker, Superintendent of Montana City School. I am here in support of SB 339.Our school is a small K-8 district on the Northern end of Jefferson County that borders the Helena city limits.

Montana City School enjoys and works hard to maintain its reputation as a great school and, as such, is a contributing factor in drawing people to this area. Property in North Jefferson County is expensive, but people are willing live in this area because of its close proximity to Helena and its attractive rural environment.

The school district welcomes residential development but has struggled and continues to struggle to maintain the quality educational environment we currently have. The vision at our school is **Educational Excellence – Above the Line by Design** (not by chance). Currently, by design, we are a part of the Jefferson County subdivision review process so that we can make developers aware of the impact of new residential construction on school enrollment and also plan for the upcoming growth in our district.

In 1991, Montana City School enrollment was 183 students. The current school enrollment is 400. To keep pace with this growth the district encountered many hurdles. In 1995 and 1998 the bonds to build a new school were defeated by the taxpayers. During this time we had students being educated in hall ways, and in closets. At one point we had 6 different lunch rotations because our lunch room wasn't large enough. This forced some students to go 5 ½ hour before getting served lunch. In 1999 a bond for just over 2 million dollars was passed to build on the current site. Our current facility was built to hold approximately 500 students.

The point is that although we have maintained an excellent educational environment it has and continues to be difficult with the current rate of growth, even with the low density rural development. Senate Bill 339 will ensure that our county commissioners maintain control of the current growth policy and zoning regulations. If this happens I am confident that our school will be able to maintain the quality education it currently provides.

If our county loses control of zoning it will open the door to high density residential developments. These developments will force our district into reacting to growth issues instead of planning for them.

This is one bill that will assist our district in continuing to provide a quality education and doesn't involve asking the legislature for additional funding.

RESOLUTION NUMBER 2007-1
SUPPORT FOR MORATORIUM ON MUNICIPAL ANNEXATION

WHEREAS, the Montana City School District, the "District", has experienced considerable growth during the past decade. This growth has strained school resources, forcing the District to invest time and money into planning and preparations for projected student growth in coming years ("Planned Growth") to ensure adequate classrooms, teachers, transportation, and funding. Planned Growth is based upon 1) evaluating student population growth and 2) studying current zoning regulations within north Jefferson County and using that information to project potential future growth related to the number of homes that can be built on vacant land within the District.

WHEREAS, the North Jefferson County Zoning Commission has a current set of zoning regulations in place in north Jefferson County that protect the health, safety, and welfare of north Jefferson County residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Helena has attempted to create a City Planning Board whose actions may interfere with North Jefferson County Zoning Regulations, the Jefferson County Growth Policy, as well as Jefferson County Planning Regulations; and

WHEREAS, City of Helena zoning coinciding with annexation has the potential to create higher densities in north Jefferson County than what has been planned within the District;

WHEREAS, the current Jefferson County Commission has passed a moratorium upon city annexation within the North Jefferson County Zoning District for a period of one year for the preservation of the integrity of the current zoning district, growth policy, and subdivision regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Montana City School District #27 wants to be notified, involved in, and represented in the decision making process for decisions that affect the zoning of district properties.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montana City School District #27 hereby supports the above mentioned adopted county moratorium upon any municipal annexation into the North Jefferson County to preserve Planned Growth within

Recommended Actions

The Committee recognizes that planning will be an ongoing effort. The Board has adopted the principles of fiscal responsibility, open communication with the community, and accountability. Implementing the following recommendations puts into place a structure to ensure that those in a position to make decisions will have the right information and strategies needed to make sound decisions for the District.

Recommendation 1 The District should hold a public hearing to discuss the results of this report and inform the community of the identified options and proposed strategies.

Recommendation 2 The District should complete a survey of the registered voters and residents of both Montana City and Clancy School Districts to:

- Obtain demographic information regarding school age children;
- Clarify and obtain feedback on the identified growth related issues; and
- Educate the public on the options, specifically inter-local agreements and consolidation.

Recommendation 3 The District should use the identified trigger points to complete an annual analysis in the fall of each year to determine the level of growth experienced by the School District. In addition, the District should also obtain information regarding proposed and approved subdivisions, as this may be a prime indicator for projecting future growth.

Recommendation 4 The District should build its bonding capacity so that when needed, an adequate bonding level is available to pursue appropriate options. The District should also look to long-term solutions and not rely on temporary fixes.

Recommendation 5 The District should update this report periodically as a result of information obtained through the annual analysis and public hearing processes.

Source: Montana City School Comprehensive Facility Planning Committee 2006 Report, April 2006

March 12, 2007
Mary Bryson, Chairman
Board of Trustees
Montana City School District #27
Testimony on Senate Bill 339
House Local Government

Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, for the record I am Mary Bryson, Chairman of the Montana City School District #27 Board of Trustees. We rise in support of SB 339. Montana City School District has experienced considerable growth in the past decade. This growth has strained school resources and we project continued growth in our student population. In an effort to recognize and plan for this continued growth, in August 2005 the Trustees called for the creation of a Comprehensive Facility Planning Committee to 1) study area growth and its impact on student enrollment, 2) identify options available for accommodating anticipated growth in student enrollment, and 3) create a plan to proactively manage the effects of student enrollment growth on our facilities and programs. The Committee issued its report in April 2006 and attached to my testimony are the recommendations contained in the report. I would like to report that the District has implemented these recommendations and that is why we are here today in support of SB 339.

Using the current North Jefferson County Zoning Regulations, the Jefferson County Growth Policy as well as the Jefferson County Planning Regulations, and student enrollment figures to project future enrollment, we believe we have a 4-5 year window to continue to explore known options and identify new ideas for dealing with outgrowing our current facility. We believe we need to decide on a course of action 3 years prior to needing a solution – thus allowing adequate time to implement a solution. We also completed our survey of district residents in both the Montana City School District and the Clancy School District and have reviewed the survey results. Our support of SB 339 can be explained by considering two factors that the Board has identified as a result of our planning:

1. Changes in the zoning regulations could have a significant impact on the rate of growth the district experiences; and
2. Survey results confirm that class size at their local school is the most important factor in determining the overall quality of education. (79.15 percent deemed class size as "extremely important" or "somewhat important")

There are many factors the Board must consider in projecting and planning for the impact of enrollment growth on the education of our children. We as a Board of Trustees can, through Board decisions, control classroom size and manage the growth in student enrollment. However, we have no control over changes in zoning regulations. Zoning regulation decisions are made by others. Today, we live in a "rural" community, with corresponding zoning regulations that reflect that "rural" philosophy. We also live close to the city of Helena, an "urban" community, with the corresponding "urban" zoning philosophy. Annexation of district properties into the city of Helena would impose "urban" zoning onto to those properties. This change in zoning would accelerate the rate of population growth the district experiences, thereby shortening the Board's window for deciding on a course of action. The Board has adopted Resolution 2007-1 to reflect our position on this proposed annexation of district properties into the city of Helena. (See attached Resolution Number 2007-1, adopted January 2007). We believe SB 339 provides a basis for improving communications between impacted parties and enabling planned growth to occur in those rural districts that neighbor urban communities. Please vote yes on SB 339. Thank you.