

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 3/16/07
SB 142

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LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY

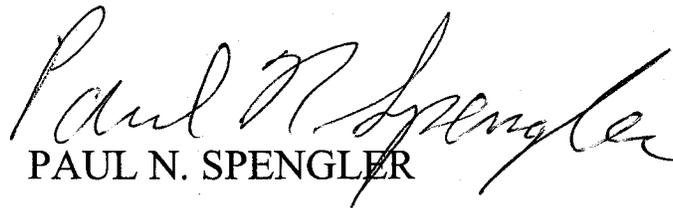
January 29, 2007

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR SB 142

I support SB 142 as the Lewis and Clark County Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator for these reasons:

1. It clarifies the role of DPHHS and the governor in a disaster or emergency.
2. The bill provides for a closer working relationship with health officials and emergency managers.
3. SB 142 does not negate or diminish the authority of local government officials to perform their duties during disasters or emergencies.

As a local emergency manager I believe that it would enhance, rather than hinder, the excellent cooperation and coordination that I now enjoy with my local health department and DPHHS.


PAUL N. SPENGLER



March 15, 2007

Honorable Representative Diane Rice, Chair
Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Safety Committee
Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Support for SB142 regarding public health emergencies as amended

Dear Representative Rice:

The Missoula City-County Board of Health and Department support SB 142 as amended. The amendments in the bill came out of a Senate subcommittee that included local public health and local disaster and emergency services (DES) representatives.

I find the most important provisions of the amended bill to be that it:

- Allows health care workers holding only out-of-state professional licenses to respond to a public health emergency in Montana thereby making a critical resource available to our state -- ***a provision that needs a supermajority vote to pass with the bill;*** and,
- Requires that the necessary planning for public health emergencies is actually accomplished and done so within the existing DES and Title 10 MCA framework. The fact that current law ***allows*** such a plan is not the same as ***assuring*** that a sound public health emergency plan becomes a reality.
- Connects the roles of public health and DES in existing Titles 50 MCA and 10 MCA, respectively, ***without*** diminishing the authorities of either.

The decades-long reprieve this nation has had from a large scale public health emergency such as pandemic influenza leaves us insufficiently experienced and insufficiently prepared for this type of possible calamity in the modern day. SB 142 begins to address this vulnerability.

Sincerely,


Ellen Leahy
Health Officer

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