EXHIBIT 4
DATE 01/30/07
HB 288

Testimony in Support of HB 288 Depleted Uranium Testing for Certain Veterans
From Dr. Walter Rea Knight, 553 State Street, Helena 30 January 2007

The United States has used as much as 3000 tons of "depleted" uranium (DU) munitions in Iraq since the first Gulf War. DU is a waste product of nuclear power plants. Uranium 235 has been depleted; however, the remaining material is 99.8% uranium 238, which is twice as dense as lead, and when used to tip conventional weapons, penetrates tank armor and vaporizes people at 4000 degrees. When these weapons are fired, small particles released, if breathed in, can result in radiation poisoning, a variety of cancers depending on organs affected, DNA damage, and birth defects in future generations.

Although the U.S. Department of Defense still claims that low levels of radiation are not harmful to our troops, I want to present evidence that the Pentagon has known that the use of DU presents a significant risk to the troops, who are not adequately protected. Most of the information which follows is taken from Helen Caldicott's 2004 book: "The New Nuclear Danger."

In Saudi Arabia, where DU was tested by the U.S., the Saudi government demanded that the U.S. collect all tanks, vehicles, and instruments of war destroyed by DU on their territory. Because Saudi Arabia is a close U.S. ally, contaminated equipment was taken back to the U.S. to be stored with extreme care. A high-priced, high-security, high-tech cocoon was constructed at the Savannah River Nuclear Facility in Georgia to process radioactive material from the contaminated equipment. This building (Building 101) has special walls and flooring to prevent air or dust from escaping to the outside world.

A secret report by the United Kingdom atomic energy authority in April 1991 warned that only 40 tons of uranium debris left from DU in Iraq could cause over 500,000 deaths. Actual debris was over 300 tons.

In the U.S. concern about uranium has been so great that large contaminated areas of soil were dredged, containerized, and removed during clean-up of Uranium 238 contamination at the Starmet plant in Concord, Massachusetts: at Scandia National Labs: and at Kirkland Air Force Base in New Mexico, where DU penetrators had been fired.

A July 1990 Army report warned, "Assuming U.S. regulatory standards and health physics practices are followed, it is likely that some form of remediable action will be required in a DU post-combat environment." However, once the scale and cost of the clean-up were realized, the Army Environmental Policy Institute informed the U.S. policy makers that "no international law, treaty, regulation, or custom requires the United States to remediate the Gulf War battlefields." Dan Fahey of the Military Toxics Project said, "The United States established a precedent during the Gulf War which permits an armed force to use depleted uranium weapons without warning civilian populations about contamination of the land." However, precedent does not make the use of DU legal. Dr. Bertell points out, "The use of DU is illegal under Humanitarian Law. It is not disputable that DU powder produces an invisible metal fume(when ignited on impact). This alone is a violation of the Geneva Protocol on the Use of Gas in War (Bertell, International Journal of Health Services 36(3) 503-520, 2006). Continued.

Finally, in their only statement of responsibility, the Department of Defense admitted in January of 1998, "Our investigation into potential health hazards of depleted uranium point to serious deficiencies in what our troops understand about the health effects of DU . .... Combat troops or those carrying out support functions generally did not know that DU contaminated equipment, such as enemy vehicles struck by DU rounds, require special handling.... The failure to properly disseminate information to troops at all levels may result in thousands of unnecessary exposures."

The military cover-up can be partially explained in a statement by Lieutenant Colonel M. V. Ziehmn of Los Alamos Lab in 1991. "There has been and continues to be concern regarding the impact of DU on the environment. Therefore, if no one makes a case for the effectiveness of DU on the battlefield, DU rounds may become politically unacceptable and thus be deleted from the arsenal.... I believe we should keep this sensitive issue in mind when after-action reports are written."

Because of the cover-up, support personnel are not told to check soldiers for uranium-contaminated shrapnel wounds, nor are they told to wear protective suits during their own contact with contaminated soldiers, equipment or soil. In direct violation of the operative army and Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulations, there is no medical testing or follow-up of the soldiers who were either wounded by uranium or who may have inhaled or ingested uranium dust.

The point of my comments is that the Department of Defense is aware of the danger to which our troops have been subjected, and they are not protecting them. Therefore, it is incumbent on the State of Montana to insist that our troops are informed and tested.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 288.

Also, I want to invite anyone who cares about our troops to showings of two well-researched films on the subject of DU.

"Poison Dust" on February 7 at 7:00 P.M. in 107 O'Connell Hall, Carroll College.

"The Doctor, the Depleted Uranium, and the Dying Children" on March 1 at the Myrna Loy.

Real ID Act of 2005?

your response at www.HelenaIR.com, mail it staff@Helenair.com, or fax it to 447-4052.

DU poisoning

We have used as much as 3000 tons of "depleted" uranium (DU) in Iraq since the first Gulf War. DU is a waste product of nuclear power plants. Uranium 235 has been depleted; however, the remaining material is 99.8 percent uranium 238, which is twice as dense as lead, and when used to coat the tips of conventional munitions, penetrates tank armor and vaporizes people at 4,000 degrees.

Although the U.S. Department of Defense claims the low level of radiation is harmless to our troops, small particles released when weapons are fired, if breathed in, can result in radiation poisoning, a variety of cancers depending on the organs affected, DNA damage, and birth defects in the next generation. Although the VA is stonewalling requests by veterans for testing, we should insist on testing of all personnel who served in DU war zones.

Two well researched films on this subject will be shown in Helena: "Poison Dust" on Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. in 107 O'Connell Hall, Carroll College; "The Doctor, the Depleted Uranium, and the Dying Children" on March 1 at the Myrna Loy, along with comments by Geoffrey Millard, an Iraq War veteran suffering DU poisoning.

Dr. W. Rea Knight
553 State St.