SENATE AGRICULTURE
EXHIBIT NO. 2
DATE 2-23-07
BILL NO. SB 544

23 Feb 2007

To: Senator Ken Hansen
From: Montana Organic Producers Cooperative

Re: Senate Bill No. 544 - An act creating Montana Certified Natural Beef Marketing Program

Dear Senator,

On behalf of Montana Organic Producers Cooperative (MOPC), Clay McCalpine, chairman, Bob Herdegen, vice chairman, Rhad Keel, secretary, Mark R. Smith, treasurer, Karalee Bancroft, Administrator, our other board members and our membership of 20 producers, we respectfully comment on Senate Bill No. 544 and ask that this letter be read into the record.

Montana already has a "Certified Organic" program in place with rigorous standards for record keeping in care and feeding of beef cattle. Moreover, "Certified Organic" beef production meets all the standards and requirements of the proposed legislation. Additionally, "Certified Organic" producers comply with pesticide and herbicide constraints not addressed by this proposed legislation. Senate Bill 544 specifically creates a new certified regime: Montana-certified natural and Montana-certified grassfed beef. Therefore, Montana Organic Producers Co-op would request that the legislation be modified to include "Certified Organic",

BEEF (AS DEFINED BY THE EXISTING MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM) BE INCLUDED UNDER SECTION 6 OF THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION. SPECIFICALLY, MONTANA ORGANIC PRODUCERS COOP WOULD REQUEST THAT THE NEW SECTION 6 BE EXPANDED BY ONLY FOUR WORDS TO READ: "(6) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL INCLUDE THE PROMOTION OF MONTANA-CERTIFIED ORGANIC AND MONTANA-CERTIFIED NATURAL BEEF IN ITS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT MARKETING PROGRAMS."

BY INCLUDING MONTANA-CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCERS IN THIS LEGISLATION, IN SECTION 6, THE EXISTING PROGRAM WOULD BE SUPPORTED AND BEEF PRODUCERS OF BOTH NATURAL AND ORGANIC REGIMES WOULD EQUALLY BENEFIT. INDEED MONTANA'S BEEF INDUSTRY WOULD BE PROMOTED.

SINCERELY

MR Smith

MARK R. SMITH, TREASURER
MONTANA ORGANIC PRODUCERS COOP. (MOPC)