

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 1/12/09
HB 123



118 E. Seventh St.; Suite 2A Anaconda, MT 59711
ph: 406.563.5259 fx: 406.563.5476
<http://www.medamembers.org>

January 12, 2009
Representative John Sesso,
Chairman House Appropriation Committee
Montana State Legislature
Capital
Helena MT 59601

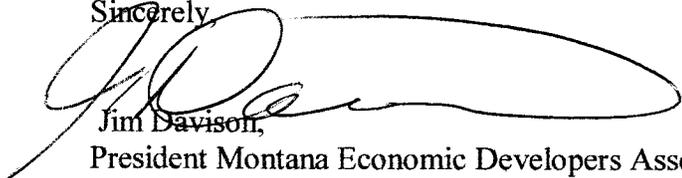
Dear Representative Sesso and Committee Members:

The Montana Economic Developers Association wants to go on record today in support of HB 123, which extends the termination date for funding the eight highly effective economic development programs sited in the legislation. These programs include: Montana Growth Through Agriculture, the Montana Cooperative Development Center, the Montana Board of Research, Small Business Development Centers, the Montana Technology Innovation Partnerships, the Certified Regional Development Corporations, the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center and the Trade and International Relations Bureau. The State of Montana's investment in economic development through these eight programs has returned huge dividends and is well worth our continued investment.

When Representative Carl Ohs introduced the original legislation creating the funding for these programs he understood the need for a comprehensive, long term approach to economic development encouraging private investment and job creation throughout the state of Montana. His vision saw the need for integrated sources of funding support, education and training opportunities, and expertise guaranteed over the long term which would foster trust and security among business owners and operators. These programs have brought that vision into reality creating an ongoing, secure source of funding options, training opportunities and expertise for Montana's businesses. These programs have returned literally millions of dollars to the State by creating new markets, training workers, establishing new businesses and growing existing ones.

During the past year MEDA has conducted a thorough review of each of these eight programs and because of this review the Association fully supports your approval of this legislation. Thank you for your kind attention to this legislation and we look forward to working with you in the future as we work together to secure Montana's future.

Sincerely,


Jim Davison,
President Montana Economic Developers Association

JOIN US AT <http://www.medamembers.org>

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- * KATHIE BAILEY, LEWISTOWN * PAUL TUSS, HAVRE * STEVE ARVESHOU, BILLINGS * KEN RICHARDSON, MISSOULA *

January 9, 2009

House Appropriations Committee

Dear House Appropriations Committee Members,

We urge you to support House Bill 123. The Beartooth Resource Economic Development has held us greatly with our business & expansion planning. We have owned and operated the Custer Battlefield Trading Post & Café here on the Crow Reservation for 24 years.

Currently the Trading Post has been successful in providing employment for approximately 33 Full Time Employees in the Summer and 17 Full Time Employees in the Winter.

We help promote our local culture by purchasing most of our art and beadwork from over 30 local artisans. This cottage industry is thriving and growing.

The RC& D has helped us with developing financing options to expand the business. The staff has been very knowledgeable and helped us to identify the innovative ways that we have developed to work here with our local culture as well as develop ideas that will help in our expansion.

We are looking forward to working them in the future and ask that you support House Bill 123.

Sincerely,



James & Julia Thompson

Custer Battlefield Trading Post



January 12, 2009

Montana Economic Development Association
Helena, MT

Attention: Llew Jones, Representative House District #27

RE: HB 123 – Extension of coal trust funded economic development programs

Dear Representative Jones:

I am writing this letter of appreciation, support, and thanks regarding the Beartooth Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc., in Joliet, Montana. Beartooth RC&D serves as a regional entity for the cooperative efforts of five counties in South Central Montana in rural and economic development.

In 2008, under the direction of Chris Mehus, Economic Development Director for Beartooth RC & D, Beartooth Hospital and Health Center in Red Lodge, Montana was able to successfully apply for and receive a Community Development Block Grant for \$600,000.

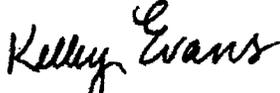
Beartooth Hospital and Health Center is a Critical Access not for profit Hospital serving the healthcare needs of Carbon County and those who travel here to enjoy Red Lodge Mountain Resort, Yellowstone Park, and the Beartooth front.

Through the efforts of Beartooth RC&D and the Department of Commerce, this small rural facility was able to secure this funding for the purchase of a new, 16-slice computer tomography scanner. This new scanner, which represents some of the highest-end technology available in radiology today, will improve the diagnostic quality of imaging services in Red Lodge.

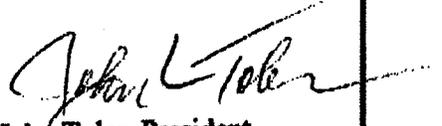
The addition of this high quality technology will not only improve the quality of life for our residents, but represents a tremendous financial boost for this rural facility helping to ensure our future as a viable healthcare provider.

We strongly support HB 123 and the future of economic development programs such as Beartooth RC&D.

Sincerely,



Kelley Evans, CEO
Beartooth Hospital and Health Center



John Toler, President
Beartooth Hospital and Health Center

cc: Chris Mehus, Economic Development Director, Beartooth RC & D

Date: January 11, 2009

From: Steve Gray/Property owner near Warren, Montana

TO: Representative Llew Jones [House Member]
Fax number 406-563-5476

RE: House Bill 123
Beartooth RC&D funding, Joliet, Montana

The value of funding for projects like that recently implemented on my property near Warren, Montana, is essential to improve the economic viability of our land and has the potential to turn what is currently over-grazed and very unproductive scrub land into very productive land and an essential renewable energy source for Montana and the Northwest US.

This particular project is a wind resource assessment, prepared, administered, and funded through the office of Beartooth RC&D in Joliet, Montana, with the specific objective to determine the economic feasibility of a commercial-scale wind farm. This wind resource assessment has significant long-term value for the economic development of the local rural community, as a commercial-scale wind farm is a multi-million dollar project employing many local contractors for project development and maintenance.

In addition, this specific project has the potential to financially benefit a number of local ranchers and farmers, to include myself and my neighbors, which will, in turn, add to the tax base of Carbon County and Montana.

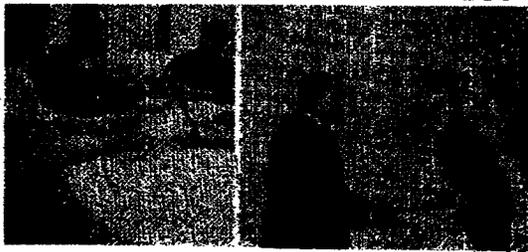
Beartooth RC&D has exceptional staff and developed a very thorough and professional grant for the wind resource assessment project under the very capable leadership of Joel Bertolino.

I encourage you to expand the funding support of Beartooth RC&D, especially given the very difficult economic conditions. These projects are essential to seed our economic development projects and funding is required to continue the mission of Beartooth RC&D in Carbon County.

Should you have any questions, please contact me; my cell number is 503-752-1877.

Respectfully,


Steven D. Gray
Property Owner, Warren, Montana



January 8, 2009

House Appropriations Committee

Montana House of Representatives

Dear Committee Members:

The Billings Area Chamber of Commerce/CVB, Big Sky Economic Development Authority and Corporation are all in favor of House Bill 123 and urge the House Appropriations Committee members to vote in favor of it. These programs are essential to sustain and support economic development in Montana and we feel it is essential to extend the statutory appropriation through 2019.

Sincerely,

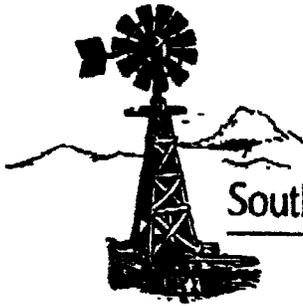
Linda L. Beck
Director of Business Outreach and Recruitment
Big Sky Economic Development Authority and Corporation

Bruce Macintyre
Director, Government Affairs
Billings Chamber of Commerce/CVB



www.bigskyedc.org

222 North 32nd Street, Suite 200 • Billings, MT 59101-1948 • Phone (406) 256-6871 • Fax (406) 256-6877



South Eastern Montana Development Corporation

Growing Montana ~ One Job at a Time

6200 Main Street
P.O. Box 1935
Cobstrip, MT 59323
Phone/Fax (406) 748-2990
E-mail: semdc@btwnl.net
Website: www.semdc.org

January 9, 2009

House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Appropriations Committee Members:

As the President of Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC), I would like to express my support and endorsement for **HB - 123** which is before you to consider.

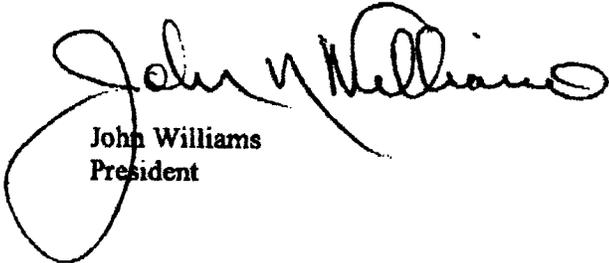
SEMDC is a regional non-profit economic development group that was established in 1997 to simulate and encourage economic activity in the four (4) Counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud and Treasure. Today, SEMDC continues to work with both the private, public and non-profit sectors to help create and retain jobs in these four counties. SEMDC partners with regional groups like the Eastern Plains RC & D and various local groups like the Miles City Area Economic Development Council (MCAEDC) to help leverage time, effort and money.

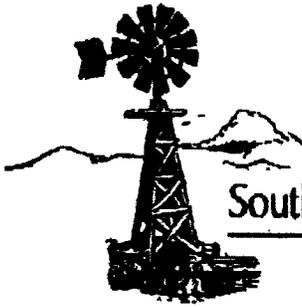
We are proud that our track record has documented nearly 650 jobs created or retained and over \$15 million dollars in project assistance since 1997. SEMDC has been approved by the State of Montana as the Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC). SEMDC also has an Economic Development District (EDD) designation from the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA).

While SEMDC has numerous tools in our "economic development toolbox," we realize that partnering with other groups in eastern Montana is the only way to be successful. These eight programs in **HB - 123** are the foundation to economic development in Montana.

That is why I support **HB - 123**.

Thank you for the consideration.


John Williams
President



SouthEastern Montana Development Corporation

Growing Montana ~ One Job at a Time

6200 Main Street
P.O. Box 1935
Colstrip, MT 59323
Phone/Fax (406) 748-2990
E-mail: samdc@bhwi.net
Website: www.samdc.org

January 10, 2009

House Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Strong Support for HB - 123

Dear Appropriations Committee Members:

As an economic development professional, involved in the day-to-day economic activity in southeastern Montana, I want to express my strong **Support for HB - 123**.

The eight (8) programs that come under **HB - 123** are the foundation to local economic development efforts. They represent an accountable and cost effective delivery of services to the entire state. In SE MT, I use four of these programs on a daily basis. They are the "tools in my toolbox" that Southeastern MT Development uses to create and save jobs.

Economic development is about effective partnerships and relationships, but stripping away capacity will cause serious loss of effective local economic development especially in the rural areas of southeastern Montana.

I know passing **HB - 123** will be mutually beneficial and I encourage you to do that.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Atchison". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jim Atchison
Executive Director



Montana AMBASSADORS

The MONTANA AMBASSADORS
a volunteer, not-for-profit organization of leaders in business,
education, and the professions with a common dedication to
living and doing business in Montana and furthering the best
interests of the state, serving at the pleasure of the Governor.

January 10, 2009

**TO: House Appropriations Committee
Chairman Rep. Jon Sesso**

RE: HB123 (Extend coal trust funded econ dev programs--reduce statutory appropriations)

Montana Ambassadors is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization whose members include over 150 leaders in business, education, and government. As an organization, the Montana Ambassadors is dedicated to helping develop Montana's business environment.

Montana Ambassadors encourage your support of HB123. For nearly ten years, these key economic development programs have proven themselves to be vital to business owners. As a result, these programs have made a huge impact on the economy of Montana. Each of the programs included in this bill have leveraged far more dollars for the state than they cost the state.

Montana Ambassadors is part of the 2010 Coalition that was formed for the specific purpose of supporting these programs. As Ambassadors for the State of Montana, we strongly encourage you to support this bill and reinvest in economic development for Montana.

Sincerely,

Ken Richardson
President

PO Box 722
Anaconda, Montana 59711
Ph: 406.563.5353 Fx: 406.563.5476
Email: gloria@montanaambassadors.com
<http://www.montanaambassadors.com>



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Development
Corporation

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Dick & Thomas PC

Herb Leuprecht

Best Western Butte Plaza Inn

Tom Downey

Paync Financial Group

BLDC Staff

Jim Smitham

Executive Director

Andy Zdinak

Marketing Director

Lisa Jones

Administrative Manager

Audrey Combo

Administrative Assistant

January 9, 2009

House Appropriations Committee
Montana State Legislature
State Capital
Helena, Mt 59602

Dear House Appropriations Committee Members;

On behalf of the Butte Local Development Corporation I would like to express our support for the House Bill 123. The extension of the programs within this piece of legislation is extremely important to the successful economic development throughout Montana

As one of the oldest economic development organizations in Montana, the Butte Local Development Corporation has worked with many state programs throughout the years. The eight state programs that are scheduled to sunset in 2010 are among the most effective programs with which we have ever worked. Our private sector clients receive valuable technical and financial assistance through these various programs that help them start a new business, improve their existing business or explore new business opportunities. All of these situations equate to strengthening our local and statewide economy.

We at the Butte Local Development Corporation recognize the daunting task that the Montana Legislature faces each session regarding its fiscal responsibility to the tax payers of the state. Over the several legislative sessions the people's representatives have recognized the need to provide effective and efficient programs to assist the private sector maintain and create jobs in Montana. The several programs that are listed in HB 123 are among the best economic development tools that we as economic development entities have to utilize. The extension of these valuable for an additional nine years is imperative and an excellent investment of taxpayer's money in Montana's future economic growth.

Once again, the Butte Local Development Corporation asks that you support HB 123. If you have any questions regarding our support of this extremely important piece of legislation, please feel free to contact us at 723-4349.

Sincerely,

Jim Smitham
Executive Director

480 East Park St. - PO Box 507 - Butte, Montana 59703
(406) 723-4349 - fax (406) 723-1539 - www.buttemontana.org

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"Your highline electric company."

Mark S. Grotbo, P.E., *General Manager*

P.O. Box 729
910 W. Roosevelt Hwy.
Shelby, MT 59474
Phone: 406-434-5575
Fax: 406-434-2531

January 9, 2009

Montana House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
Capitol Building
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Representatives:

I am writing in support of HB123 which extends a previous "sunset" date for the use of interest from certain coal severance tax funds for economic development programs.

These economic development programs are critical to rural Montana. Each program is tailored to exploring, planning, and assisting with projects to promote economic development. I am writing as the President of the Board of Trustees of the Marias River Electric Cooperative and as the Montana Electric Cooperative Association's representative on the Montana Cooperative Development Center (MCDC) board.

MCDC has an incredible list of successful businesses it has assisted and there are currently forty more projects receiving assistance. I would be pleased to visit with you and share details of MCDC's activities at your request. I am available at 1-888-434-5417 at your convenience.

Please support HB123 and promote economic development in Montana and thank you for your public service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Merle Raph".

Merle Raph
President of Board of Trustees

MR:ar

MILES CITY AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

1010 Main Street, Miles City, Montana 59301
Email: milesecon@midrivers.com

Phone: 406-234-2705

Fax: 406-874-3454
Website: 4miles-city-business.com

House Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, MT 59601

Attention: Representatives: Jon Sesso, Duane Ankney, Bill Glaser, Ray Hawk, Teresa Henry, Cynthia Jiner, Roy Hollandsworth, Galen Hollenbaugh, Llew Jones, Dave Kasten, Bill McChesney, Walther McNutt, Robert Mehlhoff, Penny Morgan, Bill Nooney, Carolyn Pease-Lopez, Don Roberts, Cheryl Steenson, and Dan Villa

Dear Representatives:

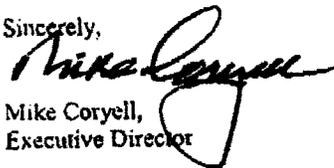
On behalf of the Miles City Area Economic Development Council and as a Loan Officer for Southeastern Montana Development Corporation (a regional CDC) **we are urging your support for HB 123 and a YES vote to extend the "sunset" clause on the 8 State economic development programs funded by coal trust funds.**

It is critical that our regional CDCs, local EDC's and our statewide SBDC be funded, at the minimum, at the level we have had the past 10 years if we cannot increase the funding that is desperately needed. These programs are the foundation of economic development programs in Montana and without these programs the regional, county and local economic development offices such as ours in Colstrip and Miles City will disappear in 2010.

These groups are vital, necessary and extremely important for the many counties and communities in our state, especially now in these difficult economic times. Our communities depend on the personal assistance and financial assistance through RLF funds to help businesses stay operating and to assist in new business development whenever possible.

Please vote YES to HB 123 to continue to support economic development for our Montana communities.

Sincerely,



Mike Coryell,
Executive Director



January 9, 2009

Representative Jon Sesso, Chair
Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
State Capitol
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Re: HB 123

Dear Representative Sesso and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the Missoula Community Leadership Team, I am writing to express our support for HB 123, sponsored by Representative Llew Jones. The bill would extend the sunset date for a group of economic development programs to 2019. Without this action, these programs would terminate on June 30, 2010. In light of the economic situation, the bill also reduces funding from the Board of Research and Commercialization and the Growth Through Agriculture Programs. Although these reductions are regrettable, the bill merits our support despite the reductions due to the severe budget constraints facing the State of Montana.

The Missoula Community Leadership Team includes representation from the following organizations with business membership: Missoula Chamber of Commerce; the Missoula Downtown Association, the Missoula Building Industry Association, the Missoula Conventions and Visitors Bureau and the Missoula Organization of Realtors. The boards of directors of each of these organizations have met and endorsed a list of legislative priorities developed by the Leadership Team. Extension of the sunset on the "2010" economic development programs is one of these priorities. The board of directors of our organization also voted to support this list of legislative priorities. We urge your support for HB 123.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chad DeLong', written over a horizontal line.

Chad DeLong
Senior Vice President

Cc: Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce
Missoula Building Industry Association
Missoula Organization of Realtors
Missoula Downtown Association
Missoula Convention and Visitors Bureau



Ravalli County Economic Development Authority

January 12, 2009

Montana Cooperative Development Center
Brian Gion, CEO
PO Box 3027
Great Falls, MT 59403

Re: RCEDA Support for Montana Cooperative Development Center

Distinguished Legislators,

Ravalli County Economic Development Authority (RCEDA) is honored to submit this letter of support for the Montana Cooperative Development Authority. We regret that we can not be there in person to deliver this important message.

RCEDA has been a Technical Assistant for the Montana Cooperative Development Center for four years. As a corporation cooperatives take more time and expertise to develop than other, better known, corporations because they are not used as often as the C and S Corp. or LLC.

Cooperatives in Ravalli County have become successful over the last four years due to the expertise supplied by the Montana Cooperative Development Center. Ravalli's first two cooperatives received a great deal of attention, both from the media and from the citizens of Ravalli County and this led to increased awareness of the model.

The Senior Housing Cooperative, an \$8 million dollar development, has overwhelming public support. This housing cooperative scheduled to open in December of 2009 will be the first in the state of Montana and has already served to assist other communities in Montana. This model provides a high standard of living and active living choices to seniors as well as an increased number of workforce homes on the market.

Montana Cooperative Development Center has played a critical role in bringing training and assistance for cooperatives like this to start up and move forward through implementation.

The housing cooperative will be a model that will flourish in Montana and help reduce our workforce housing troubles.

Voice: (406) 375-9416 • Fax (406) 363-2402
105 East Mair, Hamilton, MT 59840

The recession is now in the forefront of everyone's mind, as it should be. However, the important task of dealing with Montana's workforce housing did not go away and should not be forgotten.

Montana Cooperative Development Center must continue in order for the cooperative model to be utilized to its highest and best use, we must have the knowledge base that MCDC provides. Those that are interested in developing cooperative projects will need to call upon the Center and use their resources just as Ravalli County has done to reach their level of success.

To date three cooperatives have been formed in Ravalli County.

1. The Bitterroot Food Cooperative has over 300 members and is growing all the time.
2. The Valley Farmers Market Cooperative
3. The Senior Housing Cooperative

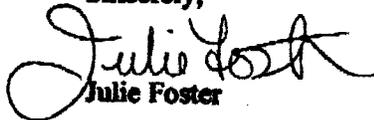
In the discussion stages are a Worker Cooperative for the building industry and an Artisan Wine Maker Cooperative.

The Worker Cooperative could be implemented in the near future and result in greatly reducing the financial pressure on the log home and building industry.

These successes have resulted in jobs and substantial tax base increase. Less than \$50,000 of public funds have been utilized to leverage what will be 5 to 8 jobs and at least \$8.5 million in tax base increase.

Thank you for your consideration in keeping this valuable economic development tool funded and available for our communities.

Sincerely,


Julie Foster



Ravalli County Economic Development Authority

January 12, 2009

Re: Letter in Support of House Bill 123

Distinguished House Appropriations Committee:

This letter from Ravalli County Economic Development Authority is to request support for HB 123. The programs contained in this House Bill have resulted in direct jobs and tax base increase in Ravalli County. Since 2006 these programs have played a critical role in starting and expanding businesses in Ravalli County. Projects completed and currently underway that has utilized these programs total over \$16 million and will result in creating and retaining 280 jobs. \$169,700 of funds from HB 123 programs have been utilized to reach \$16 million in private sector investment. That is over \$94 of private investment for every \$1 of program funds. This valuation does not count the value of job creation.

\$9 million in new projects, mostly involving expansion of existing business are slated to begin in 2009 and they all utilize the programs in HB 123.

The programs utilized in Ravalli County are the Big Sky Trust Fund, the Growth Through Agriculture program, and the Montana Cooperative Development Center.

The businesses that make up the \$16 million dollar increase in Ravalli County are in the manufacturing sectors, the life science sectors and the agriculture sectors.

HB 123 programs are critical to the continued success and economic vitality in Ravalli County. These funds leverage public and private investment that is many times the dollar value of the program request. Following is one example.

Ravalli Entrepreneurship Center (REC) – Investment from Big Sky Trust Fund \$20,000
{REC is a business incubator for life science, technology, and traditional entrepreneurs}

The result of the \$20,000 investment continues to grow, the total project was \$3.2 million, REC has recently been asked to expand the project by approximately 10,000 square feet and \$2.2 million.

The explanation for the impacts of the \$3.2 million REC over a ten year period of time is projected that there will be 35 companies graduated from the facility.

The land cost for the REC is 4 acres at \$255,360 per acre or \$1,200,000. Site development and building cost for the REC is \$2,000,000. Investment in equipment would be estimated at about one-half of construction costs.

Potential customers for the center are detailed in the REC business plan. They include three different types of customers; 1) biotech scientists, engineers or post doctorate fellows that need space for research through pilot manufacturing, 2) clients that startup as vendors and or suppliers to one or more of the already established biotech, life-science, or medical facilities that are currently outsourcing many products and services, 3) clients that are the main stream entrepreneurs that needs traditional startup business space and technical assistance.

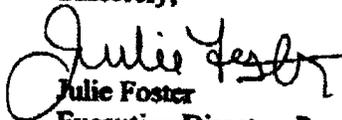
Of the 35 projected companies to graduate from the REC, 30 will move into the community. Based on the development costs for the proposed REC and the adjacent business park it is estimated that that the 30 graduating companies constructing like facilities of 1500 sq. ft. each at a cost of \$150 per sq. ft. the value will be $\$225,000 \times 30 = \$6,750,000$. Considering a proportional amount for equipment of \$3,375,000, this brings the total estimated private investment to \$10,125,000. However, if all 35 companies locate within the region, the total impact is estimated to be \$7,875,000 plus \$3,937,500 for a total private sector investment of \$11,812,500.

Of the \$16 million in private investment, over fifty-percent has been generated directly by the Growth Through Agriculture program and indirectly by the Growth Through Agriculture program's support for the Montana Cooperative Development Center.

Breakdowns of the dollars leveraged from the HB123 programs are similar for the ongoing and the 2009 projects that will take place in Ravalli County.

Ravalli County Economic Development Authority respectfully requests that the House Appropriations committee continue to fund the HB 123 programs that provide extraordinary returns to the taxpayers of Montana.

Sincerely,



Julie Foster

Executive Director, Ravalli County Economic Development Authority

Cooperative Development Specialist Contact Sheet

Ravalli County Economic Development

Julie Foster, Executive Director
105 East Main
Hamilton, MT 59840
406-375-9416
julie@rcceda.org

Bear Paw Development Corp.

Pam Lerner
PO Box 170
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-9226
406-265-5602 fax
plerner@bearpaw.org

South Eastern Montana Development Corp.

Jim Atchison, Executive Director
P.O. Box 1935
Colstrip, MT 59323
406-748-2990
sendc@bhwi.net

Great Northern Development Corp.

Jeanna Adkins
233 Cascade
Wolf Point, MT 59201
406-653-2590
406-653-1840 fax
bpic@gndc.org

Rocky Mountain RC&D

Josh Kellar
502 S. 19th Ave, Suite 105
Bozeman, MT 59718
406-582-5700
406-582-5855 fax
Joshua.kellar@mt.usda.gov

Beartooth RC&D

Chris Mehus and Joel Bertolino
P.O. Box 180
Joliet, MT 59041
406-962-3914
406-962-3647 fax
cmehus@beartooth.org

Eureka Rural Development Partners, Inc.

Tracy McIntyre
PO Box 1951
Eureka, MT 59917
406-297-7374
tracy@eurekardp.net

Montana State University

Bruce Smith
207 West Bell
Glendive, MT 59330
406-377-4277
406-377-2022 fax
dawextn@midrivers.com

Montana Cooperative Development Center
Board of Directors Contact Sheet as of January 2009

- CHS, Inc..... Rich Owen, President**
(Sponsoring Organization) 1591 Hawarden Road
Geraldine, MT 59446
737-4375
richard.owen@chsinc.com
- Montana Association of Counties..... Art Kleinjan, Vice President**
(Sponsoring Organization) P.O. Box 1175
Chinook, MT 59523
357-4127
akleinjan@ttc-cmc.net
- Montana Economic Developers Assoc..... Paul Tuss, Secretary**
(Sponsoring Organization) P.O. Box 170
Havre, MT 59501
265-9226
ptuss@bearpaw.org
- Member at Large..... Scott Morrison, Treasurer**
1481 Cayuse Road
Helena, MT 59602
443-6027
infobia@bresnan.net
- Montana Farmers Union Alan Merrill**
(Sponsoring Organization) 300 River Drive North
Great Falls, MT 59401
452-6406
amerrill@montanafarmersunion.com
- Montana Telecommunications Assoc..... Geoff Feiss**
(Sponsoring Organization) 208 N Montana
Helena, MT 59601
442-4316
gfeiss@telecomassn.org
- Member at Large..... Greg Jergeson**
P.O. Box 202601
Helena, MT 59620-2601
444-6166
gjergeson@mt.gov

Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Bonnie Lorang**
 PO Box 5237
 Helena, MT 59601
 443-1940
blorang@mitstel.com

Montana Electric Cooperative Association
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Merle Raph**
 305 6th Avenue South
 Shelby, MT 59474
 434-2536
tooleca@3rivers.net

Women Involved in Farm Economy
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Mary Ann Murray**
 Hc 69 Box 15
 Jordan, MT 59337
 557-2400
lige@midrivers.com

Montana Grain Growers Assoc
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Lola Raska**
 P.O. Box 1165
 Great Falls, MT 59403
 761-4596
lraska@mgga.org

Montana Stockgrowers Assoc
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Carl Mattson**
 PO Box 1165
 Great Falls, MT 59403
 761-4596
cmattson@mgga.org

Montana Council of Cooperatives
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Gary Gunderson**
 888 Gunderson Road
 Power, MT 59468
 463-2272
gdgun@tetonwireless.net

Montana Farm Bureau Federation
 (Sponsoring Organization) **Greg Woods**
 Box 807
 Inverness, MT 59530
 759-3240
gwoods@mtintouch.net



Consulting, Planning, Marketing & Design
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E-Mail: hb@hrb-consulting.com

Henning Bollerslev, Consultant

8985 US Hwy. 61, Jackson, MO 63755
Phone: 573 243 6999
Cell: 573 382 0488
Fax: 573 243 6723

Montana House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
Capital Building
Helena, MT 59601

January 9, 2009

Re: HB123 support

Dear Representatives:

Our consulting service has depended upon the Montana Cooperative Development Center's services for a major project in Montana. We would like to express our support and encourage the continued services that the Montana Cooperative Development Center provides to the state of Montana. With out the help of the Montana Cooperative Development Center we would not have been able to take the North-West Pork Cooperative project as far as it has gone to date. The Montana Cooperative Development Center has been there from the start providing assistance, information, encouragement, support and structure to this project.

We would strongly and seriously consider Montana Cooperative Development Center as an important and vital service to the State of Montana.

Sincerely,

Henning Bollerslev, Consultant
Consultant service for the North-West Pork Cooperative Project, Montana



74 4th Street North
Glasgow, MT 59230
406-228-3935
406-228-8793 fax
TTY 1-800-253-4091

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January 12, 2009

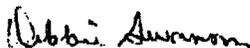
To Whom it May Concern:

Two Rivers Economic Growth, representing Glasgow and Valley County, requests your support for House Bill 123. The economic development programs that are set to expire in 2010 are essential to the economic well being of Montana especially in light of the current recession. Continuation of these programs will provide continuity in the delivery of economic development and small business assistance programs across the state. Allowing these vital programs to expire would be a huge mistake as Montana businesses struggle to survive in these trying economic times. To compete in the global economy, access to economic development programs is critical.

Please support HB 123 to remove the sunset on these important economic development and small business programs.

Your support for this effort will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


DEBBIE SWANSON
Executive Director

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



January 12, 2009

House Appropriations Committee
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

To Whom It May Concern,

InterBel Telephone Cooperative has continued to invest in Economic Development in Lincoln County and for the State of Montana. As a founding partner and continued investor of Eureka Rural Development Partners; a local development organization in Eureka, Montana, we know how valuable the 2010 Coalition's eight programs are for our success. I would like to extend our full support in the reauthorization and continue funding of the programs outlined in HB 123.

Through our involvement with Eureka Rural Development Partners (ERDP) we have firsthand knowledge of how important programs such as the Montana Cooperative Development Center are to rural Montana Communities. Last year our ERDP Director became a Cooperative Development Specialist and we are now working on a value-added wood cooperative in the small West Kootenai Community that will create at least 2 more jobs and help retain six to nine wood-based manufacturers.

ERDP is a small organization with only one full time Director and one part time assistant. Due to our size, we rely heavily on programs that provide us with technical support and assistance, such as the Small Business Development Center. Without the support of the Small Business Development Center, ERDP would not have been able to become the administrator of the Lincoln County Business Expansion and Retention program nor would we have the capacity to provide business counseling to our area.

We urge you to continue the investment in Montana Economic future and support HB 123. We know the value and positive impact these programs have on our rural communities and across the State of Montana.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Wilson", written over a horizontal line.

Randy Wilson
General Manager



PO Box 1951 - 319 Dewey Ave Eureka, Montana 59917
P: 406-297-RDPI (7374) F: 406-297-7794

January 11th, 2009

House Appropriations Committee
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

On behalf of the Eureka Rural Development Partners Board of Directors and staff, I am writing to express our support of the HB 123. We fully endorse the 2010 Programs and the reinvestment in Montana's economic future. Our office has utilized most of the 2010 eight economic programs. For those we have not directly used, we have witnessed their success through our partners and colleagues across the State.

Eureka Rural Development Partners is a local development organization in North Lincoln County, Montana serving Northwest Montana. We are a smaller organization and rely heavily on programs that provide us with technical support and assistance. We oversee the Lincoln County Business and Expansion program and would not be able to provide business development support without the Small Business Development Center. The SBDC is critical to our success as a Business Resource Center.

As the Director of Eureka Rural Development Partners, I am a Cooperative Development Specialist for Northwest Montana under the Montana Cooperative Development Center. It has been through our partnership with the Cooperative Center that we have been able to work with emerging cooperatives in wood production, construction and agricultural industries.

Eureka is a border community, and with that, we are building upon our relationship with the Montana Trade and International Relations Bureau program. Every year our local Chamber of Commerce hosts a "Home Business Expo" and this past year the Made in Montana representative provided incredible business resources for our local businesses.

We recognize the value and positive impact all of the eight programs have on our area and across the State of Montana. Only by continuing the support and assistance of these programs can we insure that on the ground Community/Economic development organizations remain active and effective.

Thank you for your continued investment in Montana economic future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tracy D. McIntyre".

Tracy D. McIntyre
Executive Director



Lincoln Electric Cooperative Inc.

P.O. Box 628
Eureka, MT 59917
Telephone: (406) 889-3301
Fax: (406) 889-3874
www.lincolnelectric.coop

January 11th, 2009

House Appropriations Committee
Members of the House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

To Whom It May Concern;

Lincoln Electric Cooperative is dedicated to the ongoing economic development of Lincoln County and the State of Montana. We have partnered with InterBel Telephone Cooperative to fund a local development organization in Eureka, Montana; the Eureka Rural Development Partners. As a Board member of Eureka Rural Development Partners, I extend our full endorsement to reauthorize the eight 2010 Coalition programs.

I personally serve as the Board President of Eureka Rural Development Partners and know firsthand how important programs such as the Montana Cooperative Development Center are to our existence. Eureka Rural Development Partners is a smaller organization with only one full time Director and one part time assistant. Due to our size, we rely heavily on programs that provide us with technical support and assistance, such as the Small Business Development Center.

We know the value and positive impact these programs have on our rural communities and across the State of Montana. We urge you to continue the investment in Montana Economic future and support HB 123.

Thank you,

Michael T. Henry
General Manager



First Interstate Bank
8210 Main St.
P.O. Box 39
Colstrip, MT 59323-0039
406-748-2840
www.firstinterstatebank.com

January 12, 2009

House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Appropriations Committee Members:

As the President of First Interstate Bank of Colstrip and an active Board Director of Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC), I would like to express my strong support for HB - 123.

As you may know, SEMDC is a regional non-profit economic development group that was established in 1997 to encourage economic activity in the four (4) Counties of Custer, Powder River, Rosebud and Treasure. Today, SEMDC continues to work and partner with the private, public and non-profit sectors to help create and retain jobs in these four counties. These SEMDC partnerships help leverage time, effort and money. All which are in short supply.

SEMDC uses their Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to effectively assist new and existing businesses. As a banker in a rural community, I find that with SBDC assistance, business plan preparation and financial statement analysis, potential loan clients are certainly better prepared when they come in to see me. Thus their chance of success is much greater.

While SEMDC has numerous tools in our "economic development toolbox," we realize that these eight (8) programs in HB - 123 are the foundation of our economic development delivery system in eastern Montana.

That is why I strongly support HB - 123.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Les Mahon'.

Les Mahon
President