



Alternative Energy Resources Organization
432 N. Last Chance Gulch
Helena, MT 59601
Phone: (406) 443-7272 / Fax: (406) 442-9120
Email: aero@aeromt.org / Web: www.aeromt.org

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2-5-2009
HB HB 361

Energy Improvement Districts—Briefing Paper

A bill authorizing cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts in order to make loans to property owners for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades.

Bill Number: HB 361

Bill Sponsor: Rep. Brady Wiseman

Position: Support

Contacts: Linda Gryczan, AERO Lobbyist, 406-431-3635 (c)

Ben Brouwer, AERO Energy Program Manager, 406-443-7272 (o), 406-465-7200 (c)

Positive Bill Impacts:

- Jobs for the construction and renewable energy industries
- Lower energy costs for homeowners, businesses, and farmers
- Improved communities by enhancing private property
- Reduced environmental impact from energy consumption

How it Works:

- HB 361 will give Montana cities and counties the authority to create Energy Improvement Districts (EIDs). A municipality would then be able to issue bonds in order to make loans to property owners within a District for purposes of installing renewable energy systems or making energy efficiency improvements to residential, commercial or industrial property.
- The bond would be paid back by the individual property owners within the municipality who chose to participate, on terms set by the municipality. The boundary of an EID would match the municipality's boundary.

Background:

- HB 361 is an innovative, low cost tool for cities and counties to help homeowners and business people decrease their energy expenses.
- Crippling energy costs, the slow-down in the construction industry, and a shrinking State budget demand innovative approaches to financing projects that will make our homes and businesses more energy efficient.
- Efforts are underway to make Montana more energy self-reliant in Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, Red Lodge, and Seeley Lake to name just a few communities. But local governments need new tools to help Montana home and business owners combat rising energy costs.
- Many Montanans are eager to make their homes or businesses more energy efficient and self-reliant, but of course, insulation, new windows, and wind turbines aren't cheap. This bill would help to defray up-front costs for consumers.
- Similar legislation has passed and is working in Colorado, Connecticut and California and is pending in Oregon.

Co-sponsors to date:

- Sen. John Brueggeman (R-Polson), Sen. Ryan Zinke (R-Whitefish), Rep. Betsy Hands (D-Missoula)



Member group of Montana Shares



Amendments to House Bill No. 361
1st Reading Copy

Requested by Representative Brady Wiseman

For the House Local Government Committee

Prepared by Joe Kolman
February 3, 2009 (10:38AM)

1. Title, page 1, line 9.

Following: "PROPERTY;"

Insert: "ALLOWING LOAN PAYMENTS TO BE COLLECTED WITH PROPERTY TAXES;"

2. Page 3.

Following: line 11

Insert: "(7) within 60 days after the creation of an energy improvement district or by January 1 of the effective tax year, whichever occurs first, the governing body shall provide to the department of revenue a:
(a) legal description of the energy improvement district;
(b) map of its boundaries;
(c) copy of the certificate of establishment issued pursuant to [section 4]; and
(d) copy of any adopted method of assessment."

3. Page 4, line 22.

Following: "Loans"

Insert: "-- property assessment to repay loans"

Following: "lien."

Insert: "(1)"

4. Page 4, line 27.

Following: "appropriate."

Insert:

"(2) Loan payments may be assessed on property records as provided for in subsections (3) and (4). The address and geocode for each real property subject to this subsection shall be reported by the entity administering the energy improvement district to the department of revenue annually by February 1.

(3)(a) Except as provided in subsection (4), in each city or town where taxes for general, municipal, and administrative purposes are certified to and collected by the county treasurer immediately after the second Monday of August of each year, it is the duty of the city treasurer or town clerk to certify to the department of revenue, at the same time that the copy of the resolution determining the annual levy for general taxes is

certified by the city or town clerk to the county clerk, all assessments levied and assessed in accordance with the provisions of [this section].

(b) The department of revenue shall enter the assessments upon the property tax record for the county. The county treasurer shall collect the assessments in the same manner and at the same time as taxes for general, municipal, and administrative purposes are collected.

(4)(a) In any city or town where taxes for general, municipal, and administrative purposes are certified to and collected by the county treasurer in accordance with the provisions of 7-6-4423, the city or town may provide by ordinance for the collection by its city treasurer or town clerk of all assessments levied and assessed in accordance with the provisions of [this section] in the same manner and at the same time as taxes for general, municipal, and administrative purposes are collected by the county treasurer. All of the provisions of 7-6-4423 apply to the collection of the assessments in the same manner as the provisions apply to the collection of other city or town taxes.

(b)(i) When the payment of any one installment of any assessment becomes delinquent, all payments of subsequent installments must, at the option of the city or town council and by appropriate resolution duly adopted, become delinquent. The city or town council may order that all assessments that are delinquent as a result of acceleration be withdrawn.

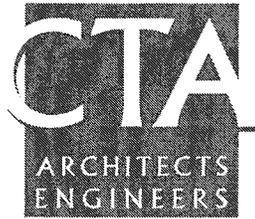
(ii) Delinquent assessments must be certified to the county clerk of the county in which the city or town is situated. The county treasurer shall collect the delinquent assessments in the same manner and at the same time that taxes for general, municipal, and administrative purposes are collected. In case the delinquent assessments and taxes are not paid, the whole property must be sold in the same manner that other property is sold for taxes. The enforcement of the lien of any installment of a assessment by any method authorized by law does not prevent the enforcement of the lien of any subsequent installment when it becomes delinquent.

(5)(a) "

5. Page 4, line 29 through line 30.

Strike: "The lien" on line 29 through "property." on line 30

Insert: "An assessment made and levied under [this section], together with any percentages imposed for delinquency and for cost of collection, shall constitute a lien upon and against the property upon which the assessment is made and levied from and after the date of the passage of the resolution levying the assessment. The lien can only be extinguished by payment of the assessment with all penalties, costs, and interest."



February 5, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

CTA has been in the architectural design business since 1938, and we have not experienced a recession this serious since perhaps those early days. We have observed a severe downturn in requests for our design services which have had an impact on the number of design and support staff we can employ. CTA currently employs 250+ people in Montana but has recently had to reduce our staffing levels in response to the current economy.

I support this bill since it will stimulate investment in energy efficiency by our residential and commercial clients who will then need design and construction services that our firm offers. This would directly impact the 250 families in Montana our company supports and, of course, the construction industry in general. These energy efficiency improvements also have a benefit to the environment through reduced fossil energy use and promote green technologies.

Loans for these projects would be paid back by real energy cost savings generated by the implementation of energy efficient projects. This concept has been used successfully by Energy Saving Performance Contract (ESPC) companies for many years and should be made available to the many smaller residential and commercial entities throughout Montana.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rick DeMarinis, P.E.

Associate Principal
CTA Architects Engineers



Mother's Power

Renewable Energy Solutions

420 East Third Street

P.O. Box 580

Whitefish, MT 59937

406.250.7853

February 2, 2009

The House Local Government Committee
Montana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I am writing to express my gratitude for the work you do and to request that you please support HB361. I believe that this Bill is an important step forward for Montana that has proven to be effective in other states. As a small Montana business owner, I am confident that this bill will directly contribute to new jobs and new opportunities throughout our great State.

I strongly believe that it is time for Montana to join the ranks of the States that are leading the way to sustainable energy independence for our Nation.

Thank you once again for all your good efforts.

Best regards,

Jeff Arcel
CEO
Mother's Power, Inc.
jarcel@centurytel.net



7655 HIGHWAY 10 WEST
MISSOULA, MT. 59808
(406) 728-7020
WWW.AXMEN.COM

1-30-2009

RE: HB 361

The Axmen, Axmen South, and Axmen Propane would like to express their support for House Bill 361.

We consider this a very worthwhile tool to help Montana citizens be active partners in addressing the energy issues that we all bear responsibility for improving.

Our companies and our employees are committed to being part of the solution and we would appreciate your support.

Guy Hanson

Montana Energy + Design
Smart Houses - Beautiful Homes

February 2, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I've been a homebuilder and designer in SW Montana since the mid 1970's. I was active in the South West Montana Homebuilders Assn., including a term as Board Chairman. During those years, I survived a number of economic downturns. I've never seen anything this serious. Our current economic crisis has stopped the construction industry in its tracks.

I support this bill for two reasons: First, I think that this bill would inject some much needed financial stimulus into Montana communities without resorting to additional governmental expenditures or taxes. Under this law, property owners would be obligated to repay loans and would do so with the cash made available by lower utility bills. These funds would continue to circulate in the local economy. Secondly, by making our building stock more energy efficient, we make our local communities more self sufficient and less vulnerable to external economic forces.

Property owners will win with this bill. The construction industry will get back to work, more of our money will stay in the community and energy prices will be more stable. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,



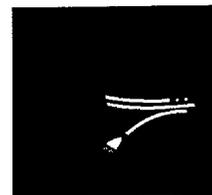
Jim Baerg

Saturn Resource Management, Inc.

324 Fuller Avenue, N-13 • Helena, MT 59601

Phone (406) 443-3433 • Fax (406) 442-1316

www.srmi.biz



To: The House Local Government Committee
Re: HB 361

February 2, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing in support of House Bill 361, authorizing local governments to enact local Energy Improvement Districts.

This **innovative and low-cost financing tool** will support the sagging construction industry, help homeowners who struggle with high utility costs, and improve the quality of our housing stock. **Similar programs are already in play** and working effectively in several communities in the U.S.

Our firm provides technical training for the energy efficiency industry. **Buildings in the U.S. consume about 40% of all the energy we use**, and our textbooks and classroom training are directed towards reducing that energy waste. Yet we have long recognized the financial difficulty faced by homeowners who choose to install energy efficiency improvements in their homes. **HB 361 provides an ideal financing mechanism for citizens who want to do their part** to reduce energy consumption, combat climate change, and support their local communities.

I urge your support of HB 361. It will provide stability to Montana communities by helping ensure our future energy security. This is a perfect time to enact this forward-looking legislation.

Best regards,

Chris Dorsi

Vice president – Saturn Resource Management

February 4, 2009

John Freer
Riverworks, Inc.
2825 Stockyard Road, C3
Missoula, MT 59808
406-370-1660

Madame Chair and members of the House Local Government Committee,

I am writing to lend my support of HB 361 authorizing cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts. As a residential contractor and long time proponent of green building and energy efficient practices, as well as the founder and current chairman of the Montana Green Build Program, I am excited to see new and innovative ways to help homeowners and business owners decrease their energy expense.

I feel the benefits of such EID's reaches far beyond just a reduction in heating and cooling costs but includes significant environmental benefits, improved community benefits through private property enhancement, and great benefits for our Montana workforce. HB 361 will not only help getting many Montanans in the homebuilding industry back to work, but will aid in creating new jobs overall in the "green" and renewable energy industries.

Sincerely,

John R. Freer CGB,CGP, LEED AP
Riverworks, Inc.
Montana Green Build Program

GILLILAN ASSOCIATES, INC.

Water and Land Conservation and Restoration

February 3, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

Our local economy is in dire straits with the collapse of the building and development industry and far too many talented builders are unemployed or grossly under-employed. Further, within our community we have several renewable energy and energy efficiency businesses that are also beginning to suffer with the overall downturn in homeowner spending.

I support this bill for several reasons: First, I think that this bill is a perfect example of the innovative thinking proposed by President Obama with respect to creating sustainable jobs and reducing our dependency on foreign oil. It is elegantly funded so that it does not create unwarranted tax burdens on those who chose not to participate in the program, and the money spent would continue to circulate in the local economy. If Montana is going to give more than lip service to re-tooling for 21st Century jobs and efficient and smart use of energy we need bills like this one. As a small business owner I offer my most enthusiastic support for this bill.

Sincerely,



Scott Gillilan
Principal



February 4, 2009

Re: HB 361 – Energy Improvement Districts

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I would like to ask for your support of HB 361, which authorizes cities and counties to establish Energy Improvement Districts.

Improving energy efficiency and installing renewable energy systems frequently have high associated capital costs. Because of this, many individuals and organizations continue to operate inefficient heating equipment and/or waste fuel through ineffective walls and windows. Some owners are unable to finance improvements to these buildings, while others are currently unable to justify the capital cost based on the current cost of fossil fuels. When energy prices increase sharply, those individuals or organizations that are unable to finance energy improvements will be unable to continue to adequately heat or cool their buildings. Those who can afford to make the improvements will need to make upgrades quickly. Cycles like this are likely to be more common in the near future as competition for remaining fossil fuel supplies, and therefore prices, increase. This cycle of boom and bust is not conducive to a healthy alternative energy industry in Montana. When energy prices are high, the alternative energy industry thrives. When the prices drop, the alternative energy industry can disappear.

Energy conservation, efficiency, and alternative energy production have never been more important than they are now. HB 361 provides a way forward for local governments that would like to improve their energy efficiency and alternative energy production. There are many reasons this is appealing, not the least of which is providing some insulation from world and regional energy price fluctuations. Montana can be a leader in this field and help start a movement toward a society where we use energy appropriately without significantly compromising our way of life. Waiting for this movement to happen on its own will only result in economic disaster for the State of Montana and the United States as a whole.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hagen
Northern Sun Solar, LLC



To: Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee
RE: HB 361

I am the Director of a business Missoula that works to improve built environment energy efficiency through energy analysis using energy modeling, blower doors, duct blasters and thermal imaging, as well as through programmatic verification work under the NAHB Green Building Guidelines, LEED for Homes, Residential Energy Services Network (RESNET) and National and NW Energy Star for Homes programs. We also work on small scale renewable energy (RE) systems, including photovoltaics, solar thermal, micro-hydro and small wind.

I am writing to express my adamant support for HB 361. I cannot stress the importance having of this kind of financing available to businesses and individuals enough. Since the inception of our business, we have struggled to find ways to assist clients in the financing of increased energy performance of new homes, efficiency retrofits for existing structures and for RE systems. We have looked extensively into Energy Efficiency and Energy Improvement Mortgages (EEMs and EIMs), looked at the sale of carbon offsets and green tags, as well as worked through the DEQ's Renewable Energy Revolving Loan Program. While these programs are well intentioned and successful to varying degrees for various applications, they present substantial technical and administrative barriers to actually securing funds and we are in dire need of accessible financing to help get efficiency improvements and RE systems on the ground. Easily accessible funding mechanisms are a critical link in bridging the sometimes increased upfront costs associated with increased energy performance, allowing for the realization of an extensive list of value-added benefits including but not limited to: The realization of long term cost savings and significant reductions to GHG emissions. The creation or bolstering of efficiency related and RE jobs in the state. Reductions to peak energy demands associated with the heating and cooling of homes (and subsequently, GHG emissions and energy infrastructure required to meet demands). Improved indoor air quality, occupant health, building durability and comfort. And the ability for local government to facilitate and benefit from efficiency improvements and small scale, locally financed and installed, disbursed RE energy generation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Have an excellent day-

Sincerely,

Sam Hall, LEED-AP, RESNET-Home Energy Rater, NAHB-Green Home Building Verifier
Director of Operations, Sustainable Building Systems, LLC

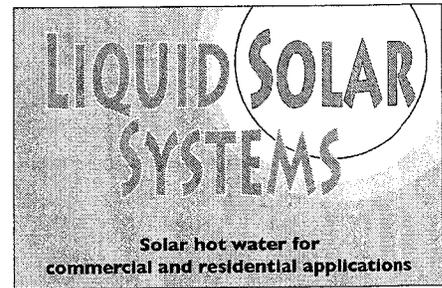
T/ (406) 396-2661

W/ www.sustainablebuildingsystems.com

E/ shall@sustainablebuildingsystems.com

MEMORANDUM

TO: Madame Chair & Members House Local Government Committee
FROM: Todd Hoitsma, Owner, Liquid Solar Systems, Bozeman, MT
DATE: 2/4/09
RE: Support for HB361 – Local Energy Improvement



This letter is to ask you to support HB 361 – that proposes loans to property owners for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. As an installer of solar hot water systems (also known as solar thermal systems) the timing of this letter could not be better. Just yesterday my company completed an install of a solar thermal system at a local car wash. This system, with 8 solar thermal collectors helps the owner reduce her utility bills – typically \$2,000 to \$3,000 per month - associated with heating water for car washing.

This was the first project funded by the Big Sky Revolving Loan Fund, a new loan program partially funded by monies from Bozeman's impact fees on "big box stores." The program allows small businesses to invest in renewable energy systems or energy conservation programs that they otherwise could not afford. Our economic analysis, which was verified by a Bozeman Chamber of Commerce economist, showed that the solar hot water system would provide the carwash owner with a 6% percent return on investment (ROI) over 20 years when accounting for the energy savings provided by the solar thermal system.

In addition to providing the carwash owner with energy savings, such projects also generate jobs. This job kept several employees busy at a time when many plumbers, builders and general contractors cite a lack of work. Like the Big Sky Revolving Loan Fund that helped make this project possible I strongly believe HB361 will create jobs for businesses like mine as well as for general contractors that are learning more and more about the value of energy efficient heating systems and well designed, well insulated buildings. Of course all recipients of such loan funds will be able to save money on energy costs. Small businesses -- like the owner of the Buggy Bath car wash (see photo) -- will ultimately be more competitive and profitable after implementing energy improvements that HB361 supports.





From gadgets to home systems

complete installations...

**PO BOX 4196 * HELENA, MT * (406) 442-4828 * www.solarmontana.com
330 Fuller Ave. STE 1**

Wednesday, February 04, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I have been in the renewable energy business since 2004, and have operated Solar Montana since 2005 here in Helena, Montana. I am currently a board member on the Montana Renewable Energy Association.

The renewable energy industry is in a burgeoning stage, but with the recent economic down turns I have began to see more restraint in new projects. Renewable energy projects are undoubtedly expensive, and one of the chief complaints I hear from potential customers is the lack of funding available.

This bill would allow families to make the kind of improvements that will initially create higher paying jobs, reduce household energy expenditures, and allow more funds to float in the local economy

This bill will allow the next stage in Montana's renewable energy development, and I fully support it and ask for your support.

Sincerely,

Jack Isbell
Owner, Solar Montana



www.winpowerwest.com

February 4, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I have been designing and installing alternative/renewable energy systems since 1987, and I am active in the Montana Renewable Energy Association, as well as other organizations that promote clean, renewable energy throughout our state and the nation. The current economic crisis is, in great part, a function of our reliance on carbon based fuels and that situation will only get worse.

I support this bill for two reasons: First, I think that this bill would inject some much needed financial stimulus into Montana communities without resorting to additional governmental expenditures or taxes. Under this law, property owners would be obligated to repay loans and would do so with the cash made available by lower utility bills. These funds would continue to circulate in the local economy. Secondly, by making our building stock more energy efficient, we make our local communities more self sufficient and less vulnerable to external economic forces.

Property owners will win with this bill. The construction and renewable energy industries will benefit with additional work (and hiring new employees!), more of our money will stay in the community, and energy prices will be more affordable and stable in the long-run for the owners/users of the properties affected by the passage of this bill. This is a win-win situation for all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ben Reed
Owner, Winpower West



February 4, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

This bill promotes efficient use of energy and the continued growth of an alternative energy industry in Montana, both of which I believe to be crucial to the sustainability of our communities both economically and environmentally. The opportunities that exist to optimize energy use and production are enormous throughout our state and this legislation would add important support to the effort without imposing additional tax burden.

The opportunity to effectively increase the "bottom line" of our residents, small businesses, and institutions by managing overhead burden such as energy costs affords those entities additional financial protection at a time when it is crucially necessary.

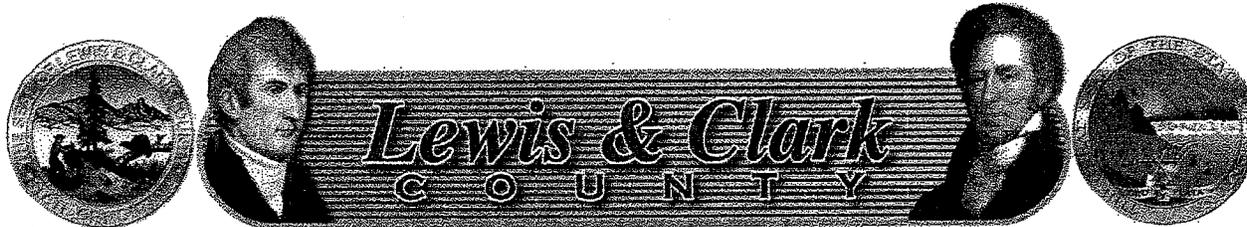
Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dan Stevenson', written in dark ink.

Dan Stevenson, PE, LEED AP
Principal
CTA Architects Engineers

10



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Andy Hunthausen Michael A. Murray Ed Tinsley

City County Building 316 North Park Helena, Montana 59623 406.447.8304 Fax: 406.447.8370

TO: Representative Brady Wiseman
(sent to the members of the House Local Gov Committee)

From: Lewis and Clark County Commission
Andy Hunthausen
Mike Murray
Derek Brown

Representative Arntzen and Honorable Members:

We are writing today to express our support for HB 361 allowing for Local Energy Improvement Districts. The bill will allow for local residents and counties to work together to address energy efficiencies and alternatives. Our energy issues will ultimately be solved locally and this bill can go some distance in assisting local bodies to improve the energy outcomes for their communities. In addition, this is an opportunity to provide local governments one more tool in their tool box to help solve local problems. Please support HB 361.

Thank you for time and service,

Andy Hunthausen *AA*
Mike Murray
Derek Brown

February 2, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

Regarding HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

I am a homeowner in Lewis and Clark County and own a rental house in the city of Helena. Many homeowners and building owners would like to make their buildings more efficient and less energy hungry, financially and environmentally. The high up front costs for projects often deters them. I believe this approach allows the community to proactively support targeted energy improvements that benefit the whole community, stimulates local business, with a formula that does not penalize the taxpayer.

I ask you to support this bill.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maxwell Milton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "M" and "Y".

Maxwell Milton
111 Alfalfa Road
Helena, MT 59602

2086 US Hwy. 93 North
Suite 130
Victor, MT 59875



406-738-8000
Fax 406-738-8000

February 3, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

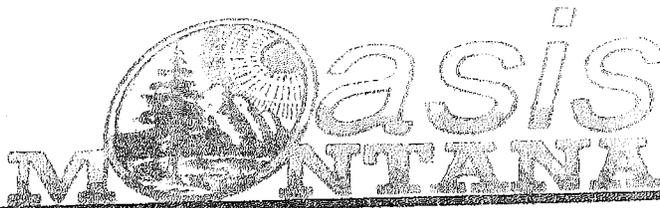
I'm writing to ask your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

The future of America is at a crossroads. If the news stories we are hearing are correct we are at the brink of the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. Most citizens are asking and generally want to know how they can help the country turn back or stem the tide of economic failure we are facing. We are all willing to do our part but we need our legislators to pitch in by facilitating new, innovative ways to finance home and workplace energy conservation, weatherization and renewable energy installation expenses.

As you are no doubt aware, Montanans are ranked 40th of the 50 states in median household income. This indicates that we as citizens can make good use of low cost loans to improve our residences. With the current difficulty of homeowners in obtaining conventional residential loans, it would be a great boost to the economy to be able to facilitate home weatherization and installation of renewable energy products while putting other members of our community back to work.

Sincerely,

Tom Bishop, President
Sunelco, Inc.
The Sun Electric Company

**Oasis Montana Inc.**

436 Red Fox Lane

Stevensville, MT 59870 U.S.A.

Fax: 406 777-0830 Local Line: 406 777-4309 or 4321

Toll Free: (877) OASISMT (877-627-4768 or 4778)

Web Page: www.oasismontana.comE-Mail: info@oasismontana.com4th February, 2009

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I am writing you to ask for your support for HB361, which authorizes local Energy Improvement Districts.

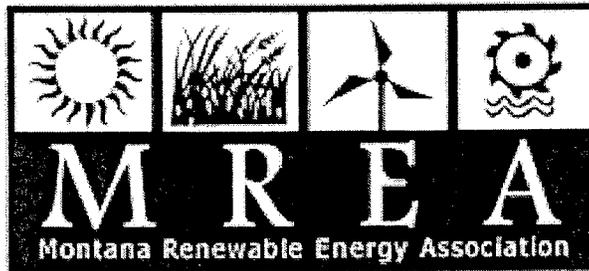
I live here in the Bitterroot Valley, near Stevensville, and I have a business that designs and sells equipment for renewable energy power systems. My business has seen its ups and downs over the years, but the current economic situation has had a tremendously negative impact on jobs and construction work in our area. Despite the tremendous interest in renewable energy technologies in Montana (and indeed, across the U.S.), folks just don't have the money to make this sort of investment. And our sales are down 60% from last year, at this time.

I believe this bill will have a positive impact on the construction industries and on my business. It will also promote lower energy costs for consumers, ranchers and farmers, and promote clean and green technologies, resulting in less pollution and less environmental damage, and it will help make Montana more self-reliant in terms of decentralized energy production.

I think this bill is a good idea, all around. Thanks for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Chris Daum, President
Oasis Montana Inc.



February 5, 2009

Madame Chair, and Members of the House Local Government Committee,

The Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA) would like to go on record in strong support of HB 361, a bill to allow local governments the ability to create Energy Improvement Districts (EID). These districts would help citizens to finance energy efficiency or renewable energy projects. By doing so, the bill would help Montanans to become more energy independent, while conserving natural resources and supporting local businesses – principles that are very much in keeping with Montana's stated energy policy goals (e.g. MCA 90-4-1001, 69-8-601, 69-3-2002).

While there are a number of financial incentives that already exist at the state and federal level, too often these come at the back-end of the process (as is the case with income tax credits, for example, or with certain rebates). Businesses and homeowners would benefit from a local EID that could provide them an up-front loan to help finance a project. Once a home is weatherized, or solar panels are installed, the property owner would see an immediate and sizeable reduction in the monthly energy bill. Those savings can then be used to pay back the loan. Once the loan is repaid, the property owner pockets all future savings, while enjoying the many benefits of clean and efficient energy.

MREA respectfully requests your enthusiastic support of this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Judge', is written over a light-colored background.

Patrick Judge, MREA Secretary
107 W. Lawrence, Suite N10
Helena, MT 59601
406/513-1001

MREA is a 501 c3 nonprofit incorporated in Montana whose membership includes utilities, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and renewable energy businesses located both inside and outside Montana. It was founded in 2001, and its mission is to expand the use of renewable energy technologies in Montana; to affect public policy in favor of renewable energy; and to educate and inform residents of Montana of the benefits and uses of renewable energy.