

**Senate Bill 508 – Sponsor: Senator John Brueggeman
Information Only Testimony**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. For the record my name is Gayle Lambert. I am the administrator of the Montana Correctional Enterprise division of the Department of Corrections. I apologize that I am unavailable for the hearing before the House Transportation committee. I am submitting my written testimony for the record.

Montana Correctional Enterprises (MCE) provides work and training programs to inmates incarcerated in the State prisons in Montana. One of the many programs that we operate is the license plate factory at the Montana State Prison, which produces all Montana license plates for the Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division.

Senate Bill 508, new section 4 states that the Department of Justice shall contract with MCE to manufacture, provide inventory control, storage and distribution of all license plates. Montana license plates have been produced at the Montana State Prison since the original plate in 1914. This bill will continue the partnership between the two agencies, and will enhance the training opportunities for offenders involved in this program by providing the Department of Justice the additional services mentioned.

Although prison work and training programs provide specific job skill training, probably the most important aspect is teaching inmates work ethics and what it is like to feel pride in accomplishments. MCE strives in each of our programs to provide valuable training that can be used by inmates to find meaningful employment upon release from prison, reducing their chance of return.

It is very doubtful that an inmate incarcerated in Montana will ever find another position producing license plates when they are released from prison, but it is probable that they could land another manufacturing position. Inventory control, just-in-time delivery and packaging and distribution experience are additional avenues to assist inmates to obtain employment after release.

Another component of this bill provides that the license plate factory become a self-supporting operation. The Motor Vehicle Division would contract with the Department to produce plates. The plates would be produced and shipped to the MVD office, a specific county or counties or directly to a customer. MCE would then bill the Motor Vehicle Division for the cost of those plates and deposit the revenues into an Internal Service Fund account. All expenditures for the cost of operations would be paid directly from the Internal Service Fund account. On the Department of Corrections side, that would alleviate the need for general

funding from our budget after the first year of the 2011 biennium, for the purpose of producing license plates.

MCE currently has two other internal service fund programs: 1. Motor Vehicle Maintenance, which operates an automobile and equipment repair shop and; 2. Food Factory, which produces over ten thousand meals per day for the State Prison, Boot Camp, State Hospital, Elkhorn Treatment Center, Helena Pre-release center, WATCH 4th DUI treatment Center and the Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Jail.

I have prepared a fiscal note regarding SB508. I apologize for being unavailable for the hearing, but am available for any questions via cell phone.

Thank you.

Gayle Lambert, MCE Administrator
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