Senate Energy & Telecomm.Comm.
Exhibit No. 2
Date 2-19-2009
Bill No. SJ 28

MONTANA RECYCLING ASSOCIATION

Senate Joint Resolution 28

The Montana Recycling Association is a non-profit organization representing private, non-profit and public entities engaged in recycling in Montana. Our goal is to increase recycling awareness, convenience and habits, both for private citizens as well as businesses and public agencies state-wide. For all of the reasons listed below, we strongly support SJ28 and ask for a Do Pass.

1. **Recycling in Montana is more than a fad, it is a real industry.**
   - A July 2004 study by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality found that recycling contributed more than 300 full-time, 40 part-time jobs across Montana.
   - The industry generated over $9,000,000 in wages and almost $90,000,000 in revenues in the state.
2. Solid waste landfills cost millions of dollars to build, expand and operate. Since 1993 both environmental regulations and economics have led to a decrease in Montana in landfills from 138 to 33. This, in turn, has dramatically increased the average distance solid waste has to be hauled to the nearest landfill.
   - In 2006, over 272,000 tons of waste were diverted from landfills through recycling. At an estimated (DEQ, 2004) average state-wide cost of $36.00 to landfill, communities avoided $9.8 million dollars in disposal costs.
3. While Montana's recycling rate (2006) was higher at 18.6 % than many of its neighboring states, it is still far below the 25% level originally set for 1996, or the 2007 national average of 33.4 percent.
4. Many of Montana's communities and citizen's desire to engage in or increase the scope of their recycling effort, but lack the basic infrastructure, expertise, or finances to start or expand.
5. Given the short life of most current electronic products (cell phones, IPods, computers) and the upcoming disposal of old analog TVs, e-waste disposal is predicted to become a major disposal and environmental problem. Programs to provide recycling for these products are sporadic and uncoordinated at present. This leads most citizens to simply discard their e-waste as solid waste.
6. Recycling by private enterprise, non-profits and public entities continues to be fragmented and inconsistent across the state.
7. Low population areas, especially, find it difficult to establish recycling programs.

Montana's effort to reach the benchmark recycling levels presented in the state's Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan would greatly benefit from a measured evaluation of the barriers to a comprehensive, state-wide program, especially the establishment of a sustainable funding source for infrastructure build-up and materials marketing.

In recent years there have been some efforts to address recycling choke-points on a state-wide basis. There is, however, still a pressing need for a definitive, bottom up evaluation of barriers as well as sustainable solutions to expanding recycling – especially in the areas outside the seven major population centers of the state.

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