2-12-09

Chairman and Committee Members
Senate Local Government.

SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT
EXHIBIT NO. 6
DATE 2.13.09
BILL NO. SB 365

Re: SB 365

Everyone is concerned about wildland fire prevention and suppression however the proposal to add a fee for undeveloped land within a fire service area does not fit in those areas of Montana that already pay a fee as "Forest Land Owners"

Currently Forest Land Owners pay up to $41.65 for 20 acres or less and 22 cents per acre in excess of 20 acres.

The striking of the sentence "the fee may not be assessed on undeveloped land for which the owner pays a fee or tax to another public agency for wildland fire prevention and suppression." is double taxation and not fair to forest Land owners.

The DNRC is responsible for wildland fire prevention and suppression on forest lands in Montana has in the past helped local fire departments in rural areas.

My personal experience in Flathead County and a fire service area for structures is concerning. I pay a $90 fee each year for structure protection where the nearest Fire Department is 45 minutes away. A good save the basement situation.

We live in a rural state and unfortunately there are responsibilities and liabilities with our life style.

Thank you.

Ronald Buentemeier