



LAVINA PUBLIC SCHOOLS - "Home of the Bearcats"

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January 15, 2009

Montana Senate
Natural Resources Committee
P.O. Box 200500
Helena, MT 59620-0500

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES
EXHIBIT NO. 7
DATE Jan 16, 2009
BILL NO. SB 100

We would like to offer our support of Senate Bill No. 100 to increase funding for the Montana Coal Severance Tax allocation. With the surge in activity at the Bull Mountain coal mine, it makes sense to allocate more funds to Coal Board regions impacted by mining activity.

Lavina Public School is located about 37 miles from Signal Peak Energy, LLC's, Bull Mountain coal mine and is 24 miles from Roundup. As you know, the new owners of this mine have dramatically increased production and hired many new workers at the mine, as well as construction workers building the rail spur. Our school has about 20 students who live in the Roundup School District.

Due to budget constraints, Lavina Public Schools, like many rural schools, can't afford to offer foreign language and advanced placement classes. Students planning to attend college and applying for scholarships are at a huge disadvantage without these courses. Our school district submitted a pre-application to the Coal Board last fall for help in obtaining an Interactive Television system for distance learning. The I-TV system will also be used for adult education, emergency services training needs, and by other organizations and businesses. Our application was moved to a full application in December, but tabled until June. We are hopeful that the request will be funded at that time.

The requests to the Coal Board far outweigh funds available, so it is our hope that the Montana Legislature will see fit to increase the allocation.

Sincerely,

Mark Allen - Superintendent
Lavina Public Schools