EXHIBIT 2
DATE 02-03-2011
HB

Good after noon Mr. Chairman, distinguished committee members of the Appropriations committee and guests in attendance. My name is Bill Willing, a veteran with 38 years military service who resides in Deer Lodge County.

I had the privilege and distinguished honor of serving as the Chairman of the Southwestern Veteran's home siting committee authorized by HB 213 of the last legislature. The siting committee tasked itself with representing all of the 110,000 veterans of Montana not just the veterans from their respective counties in selecting a site. The southwestern veterans' home siting committee was made up of a voting member of each of the six southwestern counties: Powell, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, Madison, Beaverhead and Jefferson. The six voting members selected Butte, Silver Bow as the site for the next veterans' home.

I am here today to speak to this illustrious committee on behalf of all of Montana's 110,000 living veterans. Each member of this committee more than likely has a family member who served in the Armed Forces of the United States and if not a family member your neighbors and friends are a veteran. One out of every eight men, women and children in Montanan is a veteran. I am also here today to speak for the future veterans of Montana who also will protect and defend our great state and nation.

There is a need for a third veteran's home in Montana. Of the 110K veterans in Montana more than a third of them (37,000) live in Southwest Montana. Today Montana's veterans needing the services of a long term care facility must travel great distances to either Columbia Falls or Glendive Montana to be cared for. More importantly, the veteran's family must travel great distances in all types of weather and road condition to visit their veteran family member. The majority of the veteran's in Montana are now at the stage in life that a long term care facility may soon be needed by them. The Greatest generation definitely is in this category with ages of eighty and ninety along with many Korean veterans in their seventies and eighties. The Viet Nam veteran's average age is now 64 years plus. The ageing of our state veterans demonstrates that there soon will be a sharp increase in the use and need for long term care facilities. The age of our veterans coupled with the devastating and traumatic head injuries and loss of limbs for Montana's Iraq and Afghanistan veterans adds to the necessity for a third veterans home.

The funding source for the Southwestern Montana Veterans Home is in place and has always been in place with the cigarette tax monies. The building of this facility will create jobs for Montanans and fill a need for its veterans.

The aging and severely injured veterans of Montana have done their duty and paid the price when called upon by their country. Montana's young men and women will continue to answer the call of our nation and state and do their duty and they also will someday need the services of a veteran's home. I hope that this committee will give a do pass recommendation for this bill.

Thank you for your time and your service to our Great State.

WILLIAM C. WILLING
Colonel US Army (Ret)