RHB RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
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EXHIBIT 8
DATE 3/17/2011
HB 610

March 16, 2011

Chairman Representative Duane Ankney
House Natural Resources and Transportation
Committee Members.

RE: Private Land Fire Assessment Fees Funding: HB610:

Dear Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

I have been involved with Private Land Fire Assessment Fees for a great number of years. The collection and expenditure of these fees is a very complicated issue. It is very disappointing that the decision to increase these fees by 50+ percent without prior discussions with those who pay the fees was made. Placing the buden of this increase on 55,000 landowners is not fair taxation.

With regard to Montana Forest Products ownership here in the Flathead, which I represent, this proposed increase will cost them an additional $959.50 per year. When you look at the areas of the State where the Fire Assessment Fee is collected, western, and where the dollars are spent, 40% in eastern part of State, there is already an imbalance.

I urge you to do-not-pass HB610 and find some other way to balance the budget that does not single out a certain group of landowners.

If you have questions please call.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Ronald Buentemeier

Certified Foresters
No. 20
Society of American Foresters

Certified Inspector