

Testimony on HB406 on behalf of Northern Plains

Richard Parks, 02.09.2011

Madame Chairman, members of the committee, my name is Richard Parks, and I am here today representing the members of the Northern Plains Resource Council. Northern Plains is a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montana citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.

Northern Plains Resource Council supports House Bill 406, which we believe is a commonsense acknowledgement that our buildings use energy, and utility costs constitute a growing piece of each family and business owner's budget. This is a bill about good, informed governance.

There are ample opportunities to dramatically increase the energy efficiency of our buildings. Some measures cost a lot of money to save a given amount of energy, and other measures cost very little to save that same amount of energy. We know from experience with our building, Home on the Range, that, when the proper type and combination of measures are used, extremely energy efficient buildings can be built or remodeled within conventional building budgets.

When the Building Codes Council was originally commissioned, energy was very inexpensive and an afterthought. However, now that it isn't, it is very appropriate that the Council's makeup include someone with energy efficiency expertise. This expert will be able to weigh the value of energy efficiency measures, understanding that our buildings last decades and that the lifetime operating costs of the average building dwarf the first costs. Montana's citizens will benefit from this perspective.

We support House Bill 406 and thank Representative O'Hara for bringing forward this opportunity to benefit Montana.