

SWEETGRASS DEVELOPMENT

SERVING NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA – CASCADE, GLACIER, PONDERA, TETON AND TOOLE COUNTIES

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1/12/2011
BILL NO HB 198

January 12, 2011

TO: Chairman Harry Clock and members of the House Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee

RE: Support of HB 198; Generally Revise Eminent Domain Laws

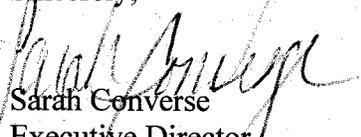
Sweetgrass Development is comprised of a five county region in North Central Montana including Glacier, Cascade, Pondera, Teton and Toole Counties. Sweetgrass Development is an Economic Development District with designation through the U.S. Economic Development Administration as well as a Certified Regional Development District through the state of Montana. The mission and objectives of the organization are to assist the governments and citizens in each county and the Blackfeet Nation, achieve their economic goals, while preserving their distinct cultures and way of life.

Sweetgrass Development enthusiastically supports HB 198, an act to generally revise eminent domain laws to include public utilities. The Montana-Alberta Tie Line, a proposed transmission line extending from Lethbridge, Alberta to Great Falls, Montana, is contained within our economic development area. The jobs that will be created from the construction of the line as well as the increased employment opportunities generated from additional wind farms that are being proposed, will be invaluable to the region. Sweetgrass Development represents Glacier County, one of the lowest socio-economic areas, with the highest unemployment rate in the state. If this change is not made, the MATL project will not be completed and all future energy projects will cease to exist. Simply put, including public utilities within the language will create employment opportunities that during these economic times, are desperately needed, ultimately increasing the tax revenues for the state of Montana.

We urge you to please support HB 198

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Sarah Converse
Executive Director
Sweetgrass Development