

HB 509 – Hearing – Health and Human Services – Feb. 18, 2011

Rep. John Esp

Testimony from Montana Outfitters and Guides Association

An average Montana outfitter with a summer business and serving around 40 hunters a season shoulders the following annual expenses:

1. License – Montana Board of Outfitters	\$ 375
2. Guides' License – Montana Board of Outfitters	2,550
a. 17 guides @ \$150 each	
3. BLM – float Madison River	200-300
4. Forest Service – Summer	1,600
5. Forest Service – Fall	1,800
6. State Lands	2,400
7. Private land property tax	3,100
8. County Sanitarian – Madison County (listed as campground/trailer court)	40
Sub total (without property tax)	\$ 9,015

This average business, which provides 17 guiding jobs throughout the summer and fall hunting season, was notified in December that although her employees are seasonal and temporary, she must begin paying state unemployment tax. She also employs kitchen, housekeeping, and accounting personnel.

Because of the economy, and (now) passage of I-161, this business has currently booked 18 hunters against a license application deadline of March 15, 2011. That's about 40% of where she was at this time last year. For the past three years, she has operated at about 80% of capacity.

This business and others like it do not need the heavy hand of government in the form of unnecessary and crippling rules added to the load. If they were not doing a good job, they would not be able to continue in business.