

Dear Mister Chairman of the Montana Senate Finance Committee:

The following thoughts are for informational and educational purposes only!

I have the privilege to represent the farmers of District 6 of the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. It is my understanding that the districts were originally setup so a director represented approximately the same amount of Wheat and Barley production. District 6 encompasses 22 counties stretching from Big Horn county in the southeast following along the southern edge of Montana continuing up the western side of Montana between the Continental Divide and the Idaho/Montana border concluding with Lincoln and Flathead counties. A District this large would incurred a disproportional cost to complete a ballot election process as compared to other districts in the State under the current production representation model. These costs would be pushed back on the producers, thus less funds available for research and marketing. The bare bones staff that the Wheat and Barley Committee currently operates with would also be stretched tremendously. If redistricting were required for a "one vote one producer" concept then the historical production representation would be diluted. At this writing I personally have not had any complaints with the current Wheat and Barley committee setup. If something isn't broke does it need fixing?

Best Regards:

Melvin Goffena

This writing is intended for informational and educational purposes only!

. First let me say what a privilege it is to represent Montana Wheat and Barley producers. I'm proud to serve as a director for area one on the Montana Wheat and Barley committee. It is a responsibility that I take very seriously. I'm in my second year as a director and I can honestly report that the current committee represents the diversity of Montana's producers and functions well as a whole. I'm concerned about the intent of SB300 to change from the current method of appointing directors to a system that elects directors. In other wheat producing states that select their directors by election and have an option for refunding, they experience much higher refund rates. i.e. North Dakota refund rate of 7.5% compared to Montana's 1.8%. I think that by creating a local contest there are hard feelings among the loser and their supporters, resulting in more refunds. If Montana's refund rate equaled North Dakota's rate the result would be loss of approximately \$200,000 that our committee would not have available to promote Montana wheat and barley.. Add the cost and the logistics of holding a fair election and certifying eligible voters, the total loss to the committee could approach \$250,000.

The current system of appointing directors works well. Appointments can be made to represent all classes of wheat and barley grown in Montana. Gaps in representation can be filled by appointment. Current law strives for a diverse committee with no more than four directors from a single political party. The high quality of past appointed directors is confirmed by their success as national officers in the organizations the committee supports. Montana has had two recent presidents of US Wheat Associates and presently a former director is going through the chairs of US Grains Council.

In closing, why change a system that is working well and replace it with methodology that would result in fewer dollars to promote Montana wheat and barley.

Buzz Mattelin

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Re: S.B. 300 - Revising the selection process for directors of M.W.B. committee

To: Members of Senate Ag Committee.

Dear Members,

First, I'd like to introduce myself. I'm Bruce Myllymaki from Judith Basin County. I farm 6 miles north of Stanford with my extended family. We raise wheat, barley, hay and cattle.

About a year & half ago I submitted my name to be considered for appointment to the M.W.B.C. I was appointed by the Senators and have enjoyed serving with other producers from around the state promoting our number one industry and directing monies toward research at our land-grant university that helps solve some of production agricultures toughest challenges.

S.B. 300 seeks to change the selection process of the members on the committee from the current one of appointment by the Senators from 7 districts (no more than four from the same political party) to a staggered election process from the same districts.

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First, as a committee member, I have not had anybody contact me about wanting to change the present system.

Second, if the selection process is changed to an election process, the committee is responsible for the costs of putting on that election. In other words the committee will spend producer check off dollars and staff time to put on an election, rather than spending ~~more~~ those dollars on research, education or market promotion.

Third, I have heard ~~in~~ that in North Dakota where they run an election of committee members similar to what is being proposed here, they C.O.B. have a higher rate of refund of check-off dollars as compared to Montana. If we were to see more dollars, refunds after going to this election system, we would again have less money to do what this committee was set-up to do ~~at~~ i.e. promote grain sales + advance research for our industry.

So, in conclusion, I don't think the process of director appointment is broken. Don't replace it with something that takes money away from what the committee is assigned to do.

Respectfully, Bruce M.

Frank Schoonover
Dutton, MT

February 14, 2011

Dear Chairman Steinbeisser:

This letter is to provide you with information about SB 300. The intent of this bill is to change the Montana Wheat and Barley Committee. There are many problems associated with this bill including the costs of implementation and the costs to the producers.

The current system allows appointment by the Governor. The Governor must choose from a pool of eligible producers who are actively farming in wheat or barley production. The seven member board can have no more than 4 people from one political party. Since its inception, over 40 years ago, the State of Montana has insured that balance. A new system does not insure political balance nor does it guarantee participation from active producers.

There will be significant administrative funds needed as well as a big increase in expected refunds with SB 300. These funds should be used for good projects that are supported by the state producers.

Over 40 years ago, legislation created the Montana Wheat & Barley Committee. That system still works as effectively today as it did back then.

"If it isn't broke, don't try to fix it."

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank Schoonover". The signature is written in dark ink and is located in the lower right quadrant of the page.