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Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. For the record my name is Amy Mills. I am from Augusta and I represent Mills Wilderness Adventures of MT. I am here in strong support of SB 400.

Thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts with all of you. I appreciate your service.

My husband and father in law have been in the wilderness outfitting business since 1977. I have been active in the business since 1994. The recent passing of I-161 has brought uncertainty to our family business.

Our family business is diverse in the sense that we offer summer pack trips in the wilderness as well as the fishing and hunting. We need the hunting aspect of our business in order to keep it viable. A University of Montana study shows this type of tourism is very robust and offers value added recreation. The relatively low number of visitors generates high revenue and takes nothing away.

With the new licensing process under I-161, it no longer matters how much experience you have, how professional you are, how sound and dependable your horse and mule herd is, how experienced your guides are, the condition of equipment and tack, or what your reputation is. I am amazed at the comments made by people who say "the good outfitters" will be fine under I-161. NOT SO! Our business will be thrown to chance every single year.

We live and operate out of Augusta. The latest census figure available for our community is 284 people. Our small family business employed 20 people in 2010. That is just over 7% of our community population. Also, our business is only one of seven outfitting businesses residing in and operating out of Augusta. Three of us each employed 18-20 people in 2010. This works out to around 21% of our population employed by outfitters. Please consider the impact of these figures to our community.

Allen's Manix Store is our only grocery store in Augusta. Our 6 month "business only" expenses were around \$9,000.00 and does NOT include our personal expenses throughout the year. Same scenario for the Augusta Service Station, our only gas station in town, "business only" totaled \$9,580.00. Again, this is only part of the money we spend locally. All of our revenue is dispersed throughout Montana. Remember the gravity of impact when considering we are only one of seven in the industry supporting Augusta's main street businesses. These numbers may seem small to others, but they pack a lot of punch in an area where jobs are hard to find. If 20 % of Missoula's population could be out of a job our state would be frantic. Augusta is only one out of many small towns across Montana where tourism is the heartbeat.

When I-161 passed, we considered only supporting our Augusta business owners, (as they supported us in the fight against 161). We thought of buying everything we could, online out of state. It has been so hurtful to be crippled by a state that our family has lived in and supported for generations. We decided instead to rise above misinformation and confusion that fueled the measure and support the state we love so much.

SENATE FISH AND GAME

EXHIBIT NO. 3

DATE 3/22/11

BILL NO. SB 400

Our business operates in the wilderness and includes a very small amount of private land hunting. Although the supporters of I-161 said, over and over, that the initiative was not directed at public lands outfitters like ourselves, it is public lands outfitters like us that are going to be most affected. For example, a wilderness outfitter cannot simply overbook our clients to compensate for a 20 - 50% loss in the drawing process-: if all or most of our clients do draw we would be in violation of Forest Service regulations regarding the number of people in our camp.

On our private ground lease we can actually over book and still take the clients because we are not under any prior set regulations of numbers at one time, just regulated in how many hunters we are approved in our operation plan to serve in one year's time.

I feel the license should be a new category available to non-residents and priced the same as the draw license at \$897.00 this year. I support Senator Vincent's amendment that says these licenses must be used only in designated wilderness areas. You need not worry about increased growth of wilderness outfitting due to a wilderness license category, because wilderness outfitters have "priority use days" and simply cannot use more days than they are permitted.

Camps are strictly regulated and physically checked on a regular basis by Forest Service Rangers throughout our season. The maximum number of people allowed in any one camp is 15, plus the outfitter has to be within his permitted "priority use day" numbers. If you have any questions about how the Forest Service manages outfitters or anything about our business module please contact me. The outfitting industry is very complex and complicated.

Even though outfitters like my family's opposed I-161 as hard as we could, the measure passed, certainly threatening and perhaps crippling our ability to make a living. But SB 400 would give us some breathing room and an opportunity to keep our family enterprise alive as well as give some relief to the small town main street businesses whose futures depend on our ability to support them. Please remember that this was never JUST about outfitters and their clients. Our one grocery store, our single gas station, just to name a few, depends on our businesses to make it in these tough economic times. It's about survival of our small town way of life. Please vote YES on SB 400, and resist any amendments that would weaken it.