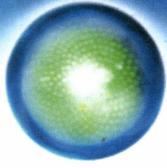


J.G.



blue marble
biomaterials

5653 Alloy South, Missoula, MT 59808 | BLUEMARBLEBIO.COM

EXHIBIT 18
DATE 02/15/13
HB 2

February 11, 2013

Dear Montana State Legislature,

We regret that we could not attend in person, but we wanted to provide written testimony to the importance of the Missoula Job Service in supporting local businesses in helping both find and train employee's. Due to the relative geographic isolation of Missoula and all of Montana from major population and education centers, job training and placement services are vital for both the recruitment and growth of business in our state. Many of the industries that match well with Montana's cultural, geographic, and resource profiles require specialized staff. The skills necessary for success are not routinely taught in the education system and some aspects of these job skills can only be gained through direct experience.

The Missoula Job Service has been instrumental to Blue Marble Biomaterials growth trajectory for Montana based expansion. The On The Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) programs have been vital in allowing us to not only hire more staff, but also provide those staff members with specialized training and skills through our own training programs or those of our partners. As a start up company the budget for new hires is much smaller than that of most other companies within established industries and revenue streams. By utilizing the OJT program we have hired 3 of our 18 employees and in turn this allowed us to have the resource from each OJT to hire a minimum of one other. We would not have been able to bring these valuable employees on board if it had not been for the funding we received from this program, which gave us the time and resources to adjust our budgets to allow us to maintain these employees and keep hiring additional staff.

Blue Marble Biomaterials has also utilized the IWT program. This program has directly assisted 7 employees to date with outside training and travel. By the funding of these trainings and the travel associated with them, Blue Marble Biomaterials has gained knowledgeable and highly trained employees without undue financial hardship, bringing knowledge bases back to Montana where they did not exist before. Without the funding received by the IWT program, we would not have been able to send these employees to the trainings, and would have slowed and delayed our growth and expansion plans.

Recently we used the STEP program to hire an intern that, without this program, we would have not been able to hire. This employee is very valuable to our company and its success, and because of the three-month funding period, we were able to hire him and plan for his future with Blue Marble Biomaterials.

We have also been able to utilize free trainings and resources provided by the Missoula Job Service. The staff is knowledgeable and extremely helpful when we have questions or are in need of some sort of grant or funding to continue to grow. The Missoula Job Service and its programs have been beneficial to the success Blue Marble Biomaterials has seen this past year.

In conclusion, we see Missoula Jobs Services programs and capabilities vital for the economic health of not only Missoula but all of Western Montana, allowing companies to train Montanans in skills that are not readily available in the workforce and benefiting the community by not only putting people back to work but giving companies the resources they need to succeed.

Sincerely,


James Stephens

