

EXHIBIT #16  
DATE 3/14/2013  
SB 147

3/14/2013  
SB 147

Dear House Local Government,

My wife and I are beginning farmers. We spent nearly 20 years working and saving before purchasing our two sections and starting our second careers as dryland farmers. The biggest challenge that farmers, particularly beginning farmers, face is accessing (affordable) land. I am opposed to SB 147 by Sen. Ed Buttrey. This bill would not allow county commissioners to consider the impacts on surrounding agriculture when approving a subdivision.

Right now, counties can consider a subdivision's impact on agriculture, as a whole, but SB 147 limits that requirement to only the adjacent agricultural operation. If a subdivision would impact our operation, those concerns will not be considered unless we share a property line (with the proposed development).

I understand that many landowners rely on their ability to develop their land for their retirement. Their fellow farmers and ranchers should be part of the local discussion about a future subdivision that may directly affect them. Current subdivision law balances private property rights with the needs of future generations. Once developed, farmland rarely returns. Asphalt is forever, as the saying goes. I urge the legislature to reject SB 147.

Doug Crabtree

Vilicus Farms 40 miles N of Havre

433 West Lawrence ST

Helena MT 59601

1971  
1972  
1973

28

I have farmed on the Spokane Bench outside of Helena since 1999.

I am opposed to SB 147 by Senator Ed Buttrey. SB 147 would not allow county commissioners to consider the impacts on surrounding agriculture enterprises when approving a subdivision.

Under current law, when a developer proposes a subdivision, local governments must look at how it will impact taxation, the natural environment, public safety and the impact that a subdivision would have on agriculture must be considered.

SB 147 limits the agricultural impact requirement to only the adjacent agriculture operation.

I know some landowners are relying financially on their ability to develop their land to supplement their retirement. Current subdivision law does not take that right away from them.

Not to consider the importance of agricultural land in every development proposal is short sighted. As a state and nation, we must hold farmland in the very highest regard as an asset for generations to come-as a place to grow the crops and livestock necessary to sustain human life.

Jonda Crosby  
East Helena

To the House Local Government Committee:  
Re: SB 147

I understand that many landowners rely on their ability to develop their land for their retirement. Their fellow farmers and ranchers should be part of the local discussion about a future subdivision that may directly affect them. Current subdivision law balances private property rights with the needs of future generations. I urge the legislature to reject SB 147.

As a member of the Lewis & Clark Conservation District I understand the importance of preserving farmland. As a former Realtor I know that all places are not well suited for subdivisions and that the Realtor's Association is not always as concerned about the long term livability of a community as they are short term profits. As a former member of the Lewis & Clark County Planning Board I can assure you that Counties do not have the power they need to do good planning and zoning that will assure we have the type of communities we want to live in. Counties need more planning authority not less.

Please vote NO on SB 147

Thank you,  
Stan Frasier

3/14/2013

Dear House Local Government Committee,

My name is Jess Alger. I grew up on my farm near Stanford and bought it from my dad in 1981. This land has been in our family since 1918. I raise grass fed cattle, yearlings, small grains and pulse crops.

At a time when we need food to feed a growing population, we have to think about the impacts on agriculture when we are building houses.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, we are losing 2.1 million acres a year to Urban Sprawl. Higher population needs more food, where does it come from? We must balance the needs of agriculture with the right of people to subdivide their land. Please, don't remove the voices of the farmers and ranchers from subdivision review.

Please vote no on SB 147.