

**KALISPELL REGIONAL
HEALTHCARE**

February 5, 2013

Chairman Jon Sonju
Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs
Room 136A
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

VIA: PDF

RE: SJ 11

Dear Chairman Sonju and Committee Members:

We write today to offer our strong support for Senator Dee Brown and her efforts to work with the Montana Senate, House of Representatives and our Governor to establish an economic development center in Calgary, Alberta.

As you know, since 2008, the Flathead Valley has experienced high unemployment. As the largest employer in northwest Montana, Kalispell Regional Healthcare employs nearly 2,700 employee-families. We recognize the key role we play in our community as an anchor for our local and regional economies.

Opportunities to increase partnerships, services and the care we provide to our Canadian neighbors have become especially important to us during this difficult economic downturn. We meet regularly with Sen. Brown to discuss strategies to increase cross-border partnerships with Canada for economic development in the Flathead Valley and across Montana.

Alberta saw strong economic growth in 2011 and 2012, and is poised to lead the country again in 2013. Alberta maintains the fastest growing economy in Canada. Nearly 4 million people live in Alberta and in 2011 the unemployment rate was just 5.5%. Alberta has the lowest taxes in Canada and is the only Canadian Province without a Provincial Sales Tax. Calgary is a major head-office center, second only to Toronto. Alberta leads all provinces in economic growth during the past 20 years with an average annual GDP growth of 3.4% per year.

A Montana Office of Economic Development supports the work we have begun with our Canadian neighbors and could give us the tools and resources we need, to successfully expand an important and growing aspect of our business for years to come.

We endorse Sen. Brown's efforts to work with our Governor to establish this center for economic development in Calgary, Alberta for Montanans. Please let us know how we can become involved to work with you on this important initiative.

Very Truly Yours,

Rebecca Manna

Rebecca Manna
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Kalispell Regional Medical Center

Cc: Pat Murdo, Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs Committee Staff
John Rogers, Chief Business Officer, Governor's Office of Economic Development