

Chairman Olson and Members of the Committee

My name is Richard Moe (M O E). I am Chairman of the Wheatland County Commission. I am here to voice my opposition to HB: 188.

Wheatland County is a small, rural county whose economy has been on the edge for years. We struggle with unemployment and decreasing population. In the past, our county had problems meeting basic budget requirements. That picture changed dramatically with wind energy. The turn around started with the Judith Gap Wind Farm. And it continues -- thanks to Small Wind Projects.

In the past year, Musselshell Projects I and II--which are both Small Wind Projects--boosted our county's economy in vital ways. The projects brought in revenue from 60 temporary jobs during the construction phase. They added 3 high-paying permanent jobs, which allowed 2 people, who were raised in our area, to come back, purchase homes and raise their families. These 2 small wind projects will generate an estimated \$150,000 annually in tax revenue. There are 3 additional Small Wind Projects currently in development stages in Wheatland County.

Each wind project also pays an impact fee, which is another way that wind projects have directly benefitted Wheatland County. Our county has used the interest generated from these impact fees to make grants to Wheatland Memorial Hospital, the senior center, 4-H, volunteer fire department, museum, and Two Dot Community Club -- to name a few. Twenty-five percent of the interest proceeds go directly to fund projects in Judith Gap and Harlowton School Districts.

**THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS: Capping qualifying small power production facilities at 3 MW, as HB 188 proposes, will stop small wind projects in Montana. Future small wind projects, such as the 3 that are already in development stages in Wheatland County, will not happen if HB 188 becomes law. Shutting down small wind projects will strike a blow to the struggling economies of rural counties, like Wheatland, that benefit greatly from them.**

I'm asking you to VOTE NO on HB: 188! Thank You.