



South Eastern Montana Development Corporation

Growing Montana ~ One Job at a Time

SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS³

Exhibit No. 3
Date 2-12-13
6200 Main Street
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February 12, 2013

Senate Finance & Claims Committee
Montana Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: Strong Support for SB - 236

Dear Senate Finance & Claims Committee Members:

As an economic development professional serving southeastern Montana, **I would like to express my overwhelming support for SB - 236 and the MT Coal Board.**

As you may know, Southeastern Montana Development (SEMDC) is a regional non-profit economic development group that was established in 1997 to encourage economic activity in the four (4) Counties of **Custer, Powder River, Rosebud and Treasure**. Today, SEMDC continues to work with the private, public and non-profit sectors to help create and retain jobs in these four counties. Our track record has documented nearly 833 jobs created or retained and over \$25 million dollars in project assistance since 1997. Since 2005, SEMDC has been designated by the State of Montana as a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) and the federal Economic Development Administration (EDA) as an Economic Development District (EDD).

The Montana Coal Board is one of key "tools in the toolbox" that SEMDC uses to create and save economic activity for the public sector in this rural and remote part of the state. Programs like the Montana Coal Board and the funding stability that SB - 236 would provide are the foundation to not only economic development efforts but quality of life improvements as well. SB - 236 would assist us as we attempt to minimize the impacts yet maximize the benefits of coal development. The Coal Board represents an accountable and cost effective delivery of services to coal impacted areas of Montana.

Please consider **SB - 236** as an "**Investment**" in the future of the Treasure State. I know passing **SB - 236** will be mutually beneficial and I encourage you to do that as well.

Thank you,

Jim Atchison
Executive Director