



EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2/5/15
HB 289

February 5, 2015

TO: Chairman Edward Greef and the Local Government Committee

Re: HB 289 - Infrastructure in Rural Montana - (Ravalli County - and the Municipalities)

Please support HB 289. In 2006 a successful manufacturing business was located adjacent to the Town of Stevensville in an area where light industrial was occurring but there was no water or wastewater available. In 2007 the Town of Stevensville applied for and was awarded a CDBG Planning Grant to work toward the creation of a Light Industrial Tax Increment Finance District. The District was created with a base year of 2011. In 2012 CDBG-ED and EDA applications were submitted for \$400,000 each to construct sanitary waste water services. These applications were successful. Funds from private investment and tax increment were used to fill the funding gap. The waste water / sewer main project completed in July of 2014.



Outhouse near Stevensville that was replaced with the wastewater project of 2014.

Today, February of 2015 we are working with a company on the edge of the City of Hamilton. Nearly the exact same situation as first described. The company has grown and wastewater and Internet are a problem. We need to be able to retain and grow the businesses we have in our communities. And, we need to be able to market our communities as open and ready for business to occur. That is difficult to do when we have a problem with flush toilets and sporadic, overpriced, Internet.

Ravalli County does not have county wide zoning and we don't have a growth policy. There are other counties that don't have county wide zoning. HB 289 enables those counties, without county wide zoning, to be able to create Targeted Economic Development Districts and use tax increment financing. This is one of the few locally driven resources available to help leverage funds for infrastructure. We are asking that you give the rural communities an opportunity to get their foot on the first rung of using tax increment financing and being able to create a development plan and use Part 1 zoning to do so.

Ravalli County has been stalled in creating a Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD) for nearly about 18 months. It is because it was not clarified that Part 1 zoning could be used to create a TEDD. One can see that it took us seven years to solve a waste water problem in 2007. You can see, with the 18 month delay, we are on that path again. We really need your help to make our path smoother. We can be part of the solution to funding our infrastructure problems if given the ability to use this resource. Thank you for your consideration. I can be reached at Julie@RCEDA.ORG or (406) 375-9416.

Sincerely,

Julie Foster
Executive Director, Ravalli County Economic Development Authority

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