

# Montana State Senate



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*The Big Sky Country*

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**Economic Affairs Interim Committee**

**Chairman Ryan Lynch and members of the Committee,**

**Thank you for the opportunity you allowed me to comment during the segment of your meeting pertaining to Agency monitoring of economic development in Montana.**

**Prior to listening to the presentations of the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Department of Commerce it was blatantly obvious that hundreds of millions, perhaps in excess of a billion taxpayers dollars are being spent in Montana each year on economic development.**

**The two presenting state agencies are responsible for establishing & maintaining a central depository of Montana census and economic information; and are further mandated to coordinate the development and distribution of a statewide strategic development plan. They also serve as the state's primary liaison with federal, state, local agencies, Montana tribal governments, private, nonprofit economic development organizations, and the private sector.**

**Therefore, it was most disturbing that neither of the gentlemen could answer any questions posed by Committee members pertaining to the amount of funding their agency was allocated for the purpose economic development, nor could they account for the amount of spending their agency utilized each year on or for economic development.**

**The following are some of my concerns as a Legislator constitutionally responsible for the strict accountability of all revenues received and all dollars spent in state government:**

- 1) What is the total amount the state is spending on economic development each year?**
- 2) Where is this funding being spent?**
- 3) What is the return on this investment each year?**

- 4) List the federal programs the state is coordinating with. Including the Montana World Trade Tower and E-B 5 funding that Mr. Rogers mentioned.
- 5) What is the total amount the federal government is spending on economic development in Montana each year?
- 6) Please explain how the state ensures there is no duplication of economic development programs occurring. And, also explain how the state ensures that economic development programs and spending are evenly distributed across our vast state.

Respectfully submitted,



Debby Barrett