

Montana Community Corrections Association

34 West Sixth Avenue, Suite 2E

Helena, Montana 59601

(406) 443-1570

October 4, 2017

Chair Ballance and members of the Legislative Finance Committee:

Montana Community Corrections Association (MCCA) is composed of five non-profit corporations that operate community-based correctional (transitional/re-entry) facilities, residential treatment facilities, and assessment and sanction facilities for felony offenders under the jurisdiction of the Montana Department of Corrections (MDOC). MCCA's mission is to increase public awareness of and to promote best practices in community safety, offender treatment, and reentry.

Between our non-profits, we operate 17 facilities in the State of Montana that supervise and monitor 1,600+ offenders daily. These services are provided in both residential and non-residential community based settings for the MDOC. This includes 9 pre-release centers in Montana that provide services to offenders who would otherwise be in a secure and more costly facility. This is particularly the case when one considers the length of stay in the community-based, residential treatment facilities versus prison.

The 2017 Legislature worked in a collaborative effort with the Governor's Office and the MDOC to implement the mandates outlined in HB2 that clearly directed the department to reduce the number of offenders in jails. All parties mutually agreed to reduce the current jail capacity to a maximum of 250 daily offenders by the end of the calendar year. During the past year there have been consistently 400 to 450 MDOC offenders in local county jails throughout the state. These overcrowded jail conditions continue to cause fiscal, capacity and operational concerns. In order to ensure implementation of this agreement, the Legislature ultimately agreed to line item restrict \$1 million of the Directors Administrative Budget to reflect the urgency of this agreement.

Additional monies are identified in HB2 to utilize programs and services that include specific residential and non-residential placements provided by the pre-release and treatment centers located throughout Montana. These cost-effective placement options provide alternatives that will facilitate a reduction in county jails, ensure public safety, and generate tremendous taxpayer savings. It is our understanding that these funds appropriated for the aforementioned programs and services are now being proposed as a possible cut by the MDOC.

MCCA understands the revenue shortfall in Montana and remains firm in our position that we can deliver cost effective programs and services that will reduce local jail capacity and overall correctional system costs. The Association Members are prepared to immediately utilize cost

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Exhibit 20

effective residential and non-residential services referenced above. The members have recently responded to an RFI, that the MDOC has released, and are flexible to meet the MDOC's jail reduction strategy that is contained in HB2. This can be achieved through community-based beds and slots that can be customized to meet the MDOC's evolving correctional needs. The Legislature recognized the centers offer the most flexible and fast moving options for curbing the growth in the system and funded these jail alternatives in HB2. It simply does not make sense to limit low cost programming.

In closing, MCCA applauds the efforts of the Executive and Legislative Branch and remain committed to delivering cost effective programs and services that will generate savings while mitigating jail overcrowding.

Sincerely,

Montana Community Corrections Association:

Dave Armstrong, Alternatives Inc.

Amy Tenney, Boyd Andrew Inc.

Paul Cory, Great Falls Pre-Release

Mike Thatcher, Community, Counseling, and Correctional Services

Sue Wilkins, Missoula Prerelease Center

Erin McGowan, MCCA Executive Director

Cc: Governor Steve Bullock
Reginald Michael—Director, Department of Corrections