

Glenda Wiles

From: michele dieterich <telechele@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, November 1, 2018 8:27 AM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: BBER report

Dear Commissioners

I was unable to attend the meeting on the BBER report, but I watched the video to see if they had changed anything based on the questions and comments at the presentation for the Ravalli County Collaborative. While many excellent critical points were brought up at the RCC presentation, none were added to the report.

I found the report to be biased towards timber and inconclusive because it did not take the market for timber into account, nor did it study similar counties that have supported the timber industry and mills instead of tourism, nor did it consider what logging might do to the burgeoning recreation and tourism industry in Ravalli County.

The BBER report has not been peer-reviewed. This is a red flag. If the report is unbiased, it would stand up to peer review. I also find the BBER to be biased because only 26% of its funding comes from the University. 74% comes from outside funding. One should ask where is that funding coming from? Based on BBER's 2017 annual report, one can only guess the timber industry. The timber products division of the BBER employs 1/3 of the employees at BBER. One of the 8 members of the advisory board is Julia Altemus of Montana Wood Products Association. 55.7% (44 of 79) research projects listed in their annual report for 2017 were timber related. Yet the timber industry provides only .9% of employment in Montana (Headwaters Economics economic profiles).

Healthcare is a much greater percentage on Montana's economy yet BBER conducted less than ten percent (12) of their research projects on the healthcare industry. Certainly an unbiased economic research agency would trend toward research that truly impacts and drives Montana's economy.

The BBER report was a waste of taxpayer money. I am sure that the 7,000 Ravalli county paid, could have been used for more pertinent concerns and the 10,000 grant of taxpayer money from the DNRC could have been better used as well.

Please be more responsible with tax payer funds. And please disregard this biased incomplete report.

Sincerely

Michele Dieterich