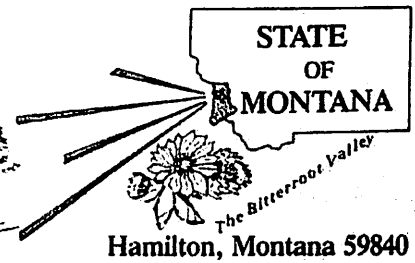
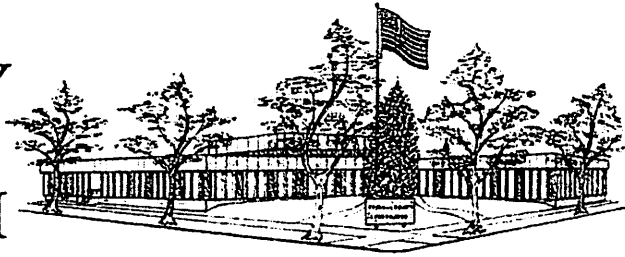


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



February 15, 2019

Representative Nancy Ballance
Representative Dave Bedey

RE: Ravalli County Request for HB 52

Representatives Ballance and Bedey,

I am requesting that you consider amending/revising HB 52 and the fund disbursement process for programs established under this bill. Further I request that the programs not be permanently funded as that will make it more difficult to require accountability in the future, until the issues below are addressed:

This example demonstrates the funding a county may receive from just three of the programs in HB 52:

\$35,000 from Certified Regional Development Corporations
\$50,000 from Small Business Development Center
\$125,000 from Food & Agriculture Development Center

Ravalli County Received:

\$0 from Certified Regional Development Corporations
\$0 from Small Business Development Center
\$0 from Food & Agriculture Development Center
\$3,000 Montana Cooperative Development Center

These programs have been in existence for nearly 20 years. Ravalli County taxpayers have been short changed. Economic development programs are needed in Montana and especially in Ravalli County. We would like you to advocate for equitable distribution of the funds and fair

access to resources. We need legislative oversight to see that all counties receive a fair share of taxpayers' dollars. The legislature should take a hard look at services that are being duplicated. Some of the HB 52 programs claim Ravalli County in their service area and in most cases Ravalli County residents are not receiving a benefit from those services. Ravalli County is simply asking for our proportionate share.

Ravalli County has requested equitable distribution of these funds and our request has been ignored. Ravalli County is left to fund our economic development organization (RCEDA) and any economic development endeavors. Essentially our local taxpayers contribute to the state economic development programs without receiving any benefit. The same organizations are funded year after year while others are not even considered.

Your consideration to resolve this disproportionate distribution of funds for Ravalli County businesses and citizens is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Burrows", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Burrows
Ravalli County Commissioner