SENATE FINANCE & CLAIMS

Exhibit No. 10

Date 4-9-07

Bill No. HB 222

Bear Paw Development Corporation
PO Box 170
Havre, Montana 59501

March 21, 2007

House Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Members of the Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of Bear Paw Development Corporation, I am writing to urge your support for House Bill 222, which is important legislation that will help to quantify the economic impact of irrigated agriculture in Montana.

There is perhaps no better opportunity for job creation, economic expansion and rural revitalization in Montana than those projects that work to capitalize on our state's value-added agriculture potential. Being able to take Montana's raw commodities and further process them in our state means that we will be creating jobs, assisting private sector growth and reversing years of economic stagnation in those areas that have been hit hardest by job losses, business closures, drought and low commodity prices. A key component to any worthwhile value-added agriculture strategy for our state must include a serious review of those opportunities that relate to irrigation. To be economically competitive with our surrounding states and provinces, quality irrigation projects must be included as part of Montana's overall plan.

Our organization is deeply engaged in assisting agricultural producers to diversify their current operations by considering investments in value-added agriculture through alternative crops, necessary machinery and infrastructure and through irrigation. The data that will be collected by the study included in HB 222 will be tremendously valuable to the State of Montana and those of us engaged in rural economic development.

I urge your support for HB 222 as a way to properly assess the opportunities that irrigated agriculture can make to Montana's overall economy.

Thank you for your time to consider these comments.

Best regards,

Paul Tuss

Paul Tuss
Executive Director