

# Montana Environmental Health Association

November 6, 2015

Montana Environmental Health Association  
P.O. Box 741  
Helena, MT 59624

Economic Affairs Interim Committee  
Montana Legislative Services Division  
P. O. Box 201706  
Helena, MT 59620

RE: SB 390 – Interim Study of Department of Labor and Industry Fees

Dear Economic Affairs Interim Committee:

This correspondence is to inform you that the Montana Environmental Health Association (MEHA) has several areas of concern related to the interim study of fees and licensing Boards. MEHA is an organization of public health professionals including Registered Sanitarians, environmental consultants and other health professionals dedicated to protecting our environment and public health. The organization is responsible for licensure and/or permitting of Montana's licensed food establishments, water systems, wastewater systems and public accommodations. The organization is also responsible for air quality programs and subdivision review programs.

The main concern of the association are the ever-increasing cost of fees, how professional licensing fees are established and are assigned to licensing boards, and whether a more fair and equitable system can be implemented for all licensed professions.

Registered sanitarians are a part of Montana's public health system and under state law must be licensed in order to provide ethical and educational standards. Most registered sanitarians work for local government and earn a modest salary. The increasing fees are a financial burden to license holders. The last fee increase of \$90.00 raised the licensing fee to \$270.00. Currently all of the registered sanitarian license fee is paid by the license holder. Our association's understanding is that our group of professionals pays a much greater fee for licensure because the number of registered sanitarians is significantly less than the number of professionals in similar groups.

MEHA urges the committee to consider the following questions when examining fees charged by the DLI to licensing boards:

1. Is there any potential for base funding for license fees from the general fund? The services provided to the public are mandated by state law and protect public health and safety. Therefore, our association believes that base funding would be a sound and reasonable approach to address this issue.
2. Is there a possibility of adjusting fee schedules based on the size of the licensure group?
3. Can administrative or legal costs be reduced to lower overall licensure fee to registered sanitarians?

Thank you for your work on the interim study. MEHA looks forward to hearing your response to the above listed questions.

Sincerely,



Christine Hughes  
MEHA Legislative Committee Co-Chair