

# Montana Environmental Health Association



April 13, 2016

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

Representative Ryan Lynch, Chair  
Economic Affairs Interim Committee  
Montana Legislative Services Division  
P.O. Box 201706  
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Re: SB390 – Interim Study of Department of Labor and Industry Fees

Dear Chairman Lynch and Members of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee:

This correspondence is to provide additional comment to the letter written by MEHA on November 6, 2015. MEHA is an organization of public health professionals including Registered Sanitarians, environmental consultants and other environmental health professionals dedicated to protecting public health. Members working in the field of environmental health are responsible for licensure/permitting of Montana's licensed food establishments, water systems, wastewater systems, pools/spas and public accommodations. The organization is also responsible for air quality programs and subdivision review programs.

The group appreciates the work that the committee has put forth during the interim study. The printed report addressing direct costs/indirect costs and history of how Boards function was valuable information.

As you may be aware, Montana law requires Sanitarians to be licensed in the interest of public health and safety. MEHA agrees that this is in the best interest of the public as licensure ensures that educational and ethical standards are upheld. Registered Sanitarians are required to enforce state law and rules, therefore it is important that there is Board oversight for purposes of determining qualifications of applicants and any complaints that may arise.

MEHA understands that the Board of Sanitarians has scrutinized the Board budget in order to determine potential cost savings. It appears that there may not be an avenue for savings, thus fees for licensure continue to increase. Approximately half of Registered Sanitarians in Montana pay their licensure fees out-of-pocket while the other half has their licensure fee paid for by the county in which they are employed. As fees continue to rise, the cost burden to the individual Sanitarian increases.

Due to the small size of the group of Registered Sanitarians in Montana, fees are disproportionately high as compared to other licensure groups (i.e., nurses 22,000+ licenses) who pay \$100/2years. Sanitarians are willing to pay a reasonable fee for licensure but at the current rate of increase, fees are becoming a financial hardship.

MEHA encourages the committee to recommend to the 2017 legislature that base funding be made available to the Montana Board of Sanitarians in a fashion which will establish sustainability for the board and reasonable fees for the future.

Thank you for your continued efforts on this topic during the legislative interim study.

Sincerely,

Christine Hughes

MEHA Legislative Committee Co-Chair