



October 26, 2016

Economic Affairs Interim Committee
Legislative Services Division
Post Office Box 201706
Helena, Montana 59620-1706

Dear Senator Vance and members of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee:

Thank you for the hand delivery of your letter from the Economic Affairs Interim Committee.

Montana State University is aware of the issues the Montana Department of Livestock faces with its Veterinary Diagnostic Lab and wants to be a partner in continuing conversations about a solution to the physical needs of the lab through a joint facility.

In 1959, the 36th Montana Legislature funded the construction of the existing lab for the Montana Department of Livestock on land provided by MSU.

Like any state agency, the Montana Department of Livestock can submit a request into the Long Range Building Planning process to be included in an infrastructure bill, traditionally House Bill 5 at the beginning of each session.

MSU is in an identical situation with regards to state-funded building requests but with the added layers of the Montana Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the university system's governing body, the Montana Board of Regents.

In order for MSU to move forward with any state-funded building project, the Commissioner's Office and the Regents must give approval. This process is completed in the spring of every even-numbered year. In this cycle, MSU proposed – and had approved by the Commissioner's Office and the Regents – a project to meet its core mission of educating students: the renovation of Romney Hall into classrooms.

Not only was this project approved by the Regents, but it is ranked as the highest priority need of the entire university system across the state.

MSU's enrollment has grown 33 percent in the last ten years making it the largest, fastest growing campus in Montana. The renovation of Romney Hall would provide much-needed classroom space that would be used by students of all disciplines.

MSU is using the same process as is available to the Montana Department of Livestock. The university is open to participating in continued conversations about a joint lab solution.

Sincerely,


Waded Cruzado
President

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