

# Madison County Weed Board

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October 7, 2013

Economic Affairs Interim Committee  
P.O. Box 201706  
Helena, MT. 59620-1706

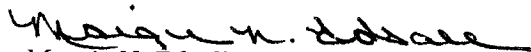
Honorable Committee Members,

*I am writing to lend my support to the Department of Agriculture and Director deYong's request of a proposed fee increase to support the Montana Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage Program. I am in a unique situation as having served on the Noxious Weed Trust Advisory Council and also serving as a certifying inspector for the NWSFF program. I do this because of the importance of this program. One of the best defenses in protecting much of Montana is the prevention of Noxious Weeds being spread to areas that may not have infestations of Noxious Weeds. One of the most important tools available is the sale and use of certified forage and straw. Our Federal Government has mandated that these products be used on public lands as well as the implied use on State public lands. This is to insure that products being brought into these areas do not have the potential to increase the possibility of noxious weeds taking hold and impacting the native habitat. It also is a tool that is utilized to ensure newer invaders do not move into areas where previously they did not exist.*

*During my tenure as the Western Representative on the Noxious Weed Trust Fund Council, I continued to support grant funding to ensure that this program had the monies needed to keep this program viable. With the changes that occurred during the last legislative session, the Weed Seed Forage Council was faced with the difficult task of finding ways to generate funding to support the program. I had the opportunity to sit in on that meeting while the committee members discussed various options, and though painful, they worked for a considerable amount of time coming up with this proposed increase. This was done because of their knowledge of how important this program is to the State of Montana. I to believe this is a very important program and hope to one day serve on this Council if the opportunity presents itself.*

*In closing I would again ask the committee to consider the proposed fee increase that has been requested. This will ensure that this program becomes self-sustainable and viable. Thank you for your consideration.*

Sincerely,

  
Margie N. Edsall, Program Coordinator  
Madison County Weed Board

Cc Montana Department of Agriculture