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Chairman Shaw and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for HB 594, Montana Country of Origin Labeling Act.

My name is Jeanie Alderson. Together with my family I own and operate Bones Brothers Ranch, a cow /calf operation out of Birney MT. My husband and I also own Omega Beef Inc. ; we sell grass-finished Wagyu beef directly to customers. I am proud to be the 4th generation of my family to raise beef in Montana.

We raise great beef in the Montana and in the USA.
Why would we not want everyone to know what beef is raised here in the USA and what beef is raised outside the US?

All other food products are labeled with their country of origin. In Montana we pride ourselves on our independence and our ranching heritage. Agriculture is our number one industry. Lets show the rest of the country what it means to stand up for own industries – and in Montana – to stand up for our number one industry.

Montana and US beef producers are losing our independence – we are becoming serfs on our own land. We are beholden to 4 big packers to sell our feeder calves. Despite laws on the books, these four companies control our industry – we have very few places to sell our calves; and we have to take the price we are given. When our US beef is not distinguished from cheap imported beef, US beef producers lose out and consumers are cheated. COOL wont fix every problem in our industry, but it will be a start to creating a fair market for our great beef. We know from when we had COOL before, that when Montanans have the opportunity to choose, they choose beef born, raised, and processed in the USA.

Country of Origin Labeling on beef has wide support from diverse sectors of our great state. Even many people who do not support this bill, will say in public that they support the IDEA; but COOL is more than a good idea; it is an economic imperative for US Cattle Producers.

In 2014, when we had COOL, our steer calves brought \$2.52 cents per pound; but in 2015 when COOL was abolished we only received \$1.50 per pound – that is a 40.6% loss in just one year. We are just asking for fair prices for our hard work and good cattle.

I am a rancher, and I am also a mom. Feeding one's family is one of the most important jobs any parent has. I know what it is to make choices; to try to balance

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my budget while also making sure my kids get the very best food they can. It is just wrong that moms like me cannot trust that the USDA Beef they are buying is born and raised in this country. They see the "Product of the USA" label and think they are buying beef born and raised in the USA. Right now consumers do not know that the beef they are paying high prices for may very well come from Brazil, Mexico or some other country. Right now we are lying to consumers, and we are betraying Montana producers, and all US beef producers. We can do better. Montana can lead the way by resorting Country-of-Origin Labeling in our state.

Please vote YES on HB 594.

Jeanie Alderson
Bones Brothers Ranch