

Economic Affairs Interim Committee Hearing – March 27, 2014

Producer Testimony

I am a member of the Montana Milk Producers Association. As a milk producer, I am in favor of the 12-day rule because it serves the best interests of the Montana milk consumers and the Montana milk industry.

Milk competes with other beverages in the marketplace. To compete successfully, the Montana dairy industry must consistently provide the milk consumer a fresh, tasty product.

The 12-day rule insures that whenever milk is purchased in the state of Montana, the consumer will have a reasonable amount of shelf life left for that product to remain fresh of a high quality. As it stands, milk consumers, based upon their past experiences, have an expectation that their milk will be fresh and of a high quality.

Doing away with the 12-day rule would jeopardize the expectation, as the determination of for how long milk may be sold will be left to retailers, who do not necessarily share our concern about the Montana milk industry. To us, if a consumer has a bad experience with milk, we may lose that consumer forever—they may simply choose to purchase other beverages, including products like almond and soy milk.

Our livelihood depends upon happy and satisfied milk consumers. The 12-day rule helps insure that consumers are provided fresh, high quality milk every time they make a milk purchase.

On behalf of all Montana milk producers, I would urge you not to remove the 12-day rule.