



MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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August 12, 2019

Representative Jim Keane  
Environmental Quality Council  
PO BOX 201704  
Helena, MT 59620-1704

Dear Chairman Keane:

Thank you for your recent letter from the Environmental Quality Council regarding the use of Montana University System land for the Montana Department of Livestock's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. Please note, the Montana Board of Regents has sole and final authority over the use of university lands. President Cruzado and I remain committed to discussions about providing a no-cost lease of university land for a new laboratory - joint or otherwise - while balancing the needs of future students. Additional information regarding the location, footprint, terms of the lease, etc. will be needed to compile and present a formal request before the Board of Regents for consideration. Until there is a more precise plan of the size of the project, how much land is required, and how it will be financed, a formal commitment must be withheld.

Recognizing the growth of Montana State University, we are in favor of the consultant's recommendation that the Montana Department of Agriculture's Analytical Lab be moved into a new lab complex, because of its age and lack of adequate infrastructure to deal with its materials, as well as recommendations to renovate Marsh Lab into more useful space should the Montana Department of Livestock's Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory occupy a new building.

Sincerely,

Clayton T. Christian  
Commissioner of Higher Education

Waded Cruzado  
President, Montana State University