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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Members of the Legislative Finance Committee

From: Tim Fox, Attorney General *TF*

Date: August 26, 2015

Subject: Department of Justice, Forensic Science Division, Yellowstone County Crime Lab

The 2015 Legislature enacted House Bill 512 which established an eastern Montana laboratory of criminalistics in Yellowstone County. The title of the bill, per the direction of the presenters of the bill, included language that implied an appropriation for leasing the laboratory.

In Section 2 of the bill, the appropriation section reads, "(1) The department is authorized to spend up to \$310,000 of general fund one time only to secure appropriate leased facilities for the biennium for the Yellowstone County branch of the laboratory." Though the legislature authorized the department to spend, an appropriation or budget was not given. The Department of Justice has not been appropriated dollars in the amount of \$310,000 to secure leased space for a facility in Yellowstone County. This poses a significant challenge in carrying out the mission and duties set forth in House Bill 512.