September 28, 2010

Dr. Barry Good, Dean
College of Technology
University of Montana
Missoula, MT  59802

Dear Dean Good:

I understand that the Montana Law Enforcement Academy is in discussions with The University of Montana’s College of Technology about seeking accreditation for the Academy’s Law Enforcement Officer Basic Course.

Under the proposal, the Basic Course would qualify for approximately 32 credits towards a Certificate of Applied Science in Police Science. I believe that would be a huge step forward for the men and women who choose careers in law enforcement in Montana. And further, I believe the benefits would ultimately extend to improved public safety in communities throughout our state.

Without question, law enforcement officers serve a vital role in every community. By opening the door to continued higher education and learning, accreditation would encourage peace officers to enroll in other related courses that are not available through the Academy. Given the frequent interaction law enforcement has with people suffering from mental illnesses and dysfunctional families, it would be very beneficial to have more officers trained in fields like psychology and sociology.

For Academy students, accreditation would bolster the credentials they earn as peace officers – a fitting reward for those who choose to serve in what can be a difficult and dangerous field. As I understand it, the proposal under consideration would provide a number of other important incentives to students, including:

- allowing students to receive veterans benefits while they attend MLEA;
- allowing pre-service students to qualify for financial assistance in the form of grants and loans for payment of tuition and fees; and
- providing a bridge mechanism for students in the university system to the Pre-Service Program and ultimately employment as peace officers.
As accreditation for the Basic Course moves forward through the university’s review process, I would like to add my full support to the Academy’s efforts. This proposal stands to benefit both Montana students and the professionalism of the law enforcement community. If my office can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

Sincerely,

STEVE BULLOCK
Attorney General

SB:sj