
Subject: FW: EQC Water Policy report -- public comment -- study subcommittee

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From: arollo@mcn.net [mailto:arollo@mcn.net]
Sent: Tuesday, June 06, 2006 4:41 PM
To: Evans, Krista Lee
Subject: EQC Water Policy report

Krista Evans
Environmental Quality Council
State Capitol
Helena, MT

RE: EQC Water Policy report

Dear Krista:

I would like to comment on the latest EQC Water Policy report. First, I would like to apologize that I have not attended any of the meetings so I realize I am not fully aware of all the discussions that took place to get to these conclusions. But I do feel I am involved sufficiently on the many issues to give my personal opinion on the report.

1. TMDLs:

- The TMDL plan writing is moving forward however there is a major lack of funds and resources to implement these plans. I would hope the state and federal government can look at the funding allocation and improve the resources needed to actually implement the plans. If we do find a way soon to implement, I worry there will be another lawsuit on that issue.

- I also feel there is very little resources being applied towards monitoring of water bodies once the TMDL Plan is written. We need to evaluate how to get more resources for monitoring once the TMDL plan is written to see if we are making progress towards actual water quality improvements.

- I would suggest that the EQC bring in several conservation districts and watershed groups that are trying to implement the TMDL Plans to see what is working and now working.

2. Water rights:

- The water rights training ideas are great. Keep that work moving forward.

- I know the primary task is to keep people informed of the water right process but do people feel informed? The Water Court has made several attempts to meet with groups to educate them on adjudication status but there are so many people not have not taken the time to hear what is going on. I am not sure of what, if anything, can be done but I am concerned that the adjudication issue is still a hot topic that needs more attention in another way.

3. Surface Water/Ground Water:

- The SW/GW workgroup is an excellent start on resolving this complex issue

- Is it time to consider rewriting the state water plan that ties All water programs together? This may be a great time and a means to pull all the water pieces together including ground water, surface water, water quality, TMDLs, water compacts, watershed efforts, and on and on.

4. Domestic well exemption:

- I agree on the concern of making changes with this domestic well exemption could impact growth but what about the cumulative effects of all the current water right holders. Should they suffer and try to prove in 10-20 years that they were definitely impacted by the growth in their area?

I would suggest that there needs to be adequate protection and monitoring of ground water that will protect the current user.

5. St Mary Canal.

- The St Mary Working group should be commended for their hard work to solve this major issue.

- I do feel this is only the tip of the iceberg though on infrastructure needs across the state. It would be nice to know what the real needs are over the state and start to pull together the necessary resources to address many of the problems before they become catastrophes.

Thanks for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Alan Rollo