

\*\*\*\* Bill No. \*\*\*\*

Introduced By \*\*\*\*\*

By Request of the \*\*\*\*\*

A Bill for an Act entitled: "An Act limiting analysis of adverse effects for certain water right applications; allowing water right holders to consent to approval of certain water right applications; amending sections 85-2-306, 85-2-311, 85-2-316, 85-2-319, 85-2-320, 85-2-321, 85-2-360, 85-2-402, 85-2-407, 85-2-408, 85-2-410, and 85-2-427, MCA."

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Montana:

**Section 1.** Section 85-2-306, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-306. Exceptions to permit requirements.** (1) (a) Except as provided in subsection (1)(b), ground water may be appropriated only by a person who has a possessory interest in the property where the water is to be put to beneficial use and exclusive property rights in the ground water development works.

(b) If another person has rights in the ground water development works, water may be appropriated with the written consent of the person with those property rights or, if the ground water development works are on national forest system lands, with any prior written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of diversion, impoundment, storage, transportation, withdrawal, use, or distribution of water under

the certificate.

(c) If the person does not have a possessory interest in the real property from which the ground water may be appropriated, the person shall provide to the owner of the real property written notification of the works and the person's intent to appropriate ground water from the works. The written notification must be provided to the landowner at least 30 days prior to constructing any associated works or, if no new or expanded works are proposed, 30 days prior to appropriating the water. The written notification under this subsection is a notice requirement only and does not create an easement in or over the real property where the ground water development works are located.

(2) Inside the boundaries of a controlled ground water area, ground water may be appropriated only:

- (a) according to a permit received pursuant to 85-2-508; or
- (b) according to the requirements of a rule promulgated pursuant to 85-2-506.

(3) (a) Outside the boundaries of a controlled ground water area, a permit is not required before appropriating ground water by means of a well or developed spring:

(i) when the appropriation is made by a local governmental fire agency organized under Title 7, chapter 33, and the appropriation is used only for emergency fire protection, which may include enclosed storage;

(ii) when a maximum appropriation of 350 gallons a minute or less is used in nonconsumptive geothermal heating or cooling

exchange applications, all of the water extracted is returned without delay to the same source aquifer, and the distance between the extraction well and both the nearest existing well and the hydraulically connected surface waters is more than twice the distance between the extraction well and the injection well;

(iii) when the appropriation is outside a stream depletion zone, is 35 gallons a minute or less, and does not exceed 10 acre-feet a year, except that a combined appropriation from the same source by two or more wells or developed springs exceeding 10 acre-feet, regardless of the flow rate, requires a permit; or

(iv) when the appropriation is within a stream depletion zone, is 20 gallons a minute or less, and does not exceed 2 acre-feet a year, except that a combined appropriation from the same source by two or more wells or developed springs exceeding this limitation requires a permit.

(b) (i) Within 60 days of completion of the well or developed spring and appropriation of the ground water for beneficial use, the appropriator shall file a notice of completion with the department on a form provided by the department through its offices.

(ii) Upon receipt of the notice, the department shall review the notice and may, before issuing a certificate of water right, return a defective notice for correction or completion, together with the reasons for returning it. A notice does not lose priority of filing because of defects if the notice is corrected, completed, and refiled with the department within 30 days of notification of defects or within a further time as the

department may allow, not to exceed 6 months.

(iii) If a notice is not corrected and completed within the time allowed, the priority date of appropriation is the date of refiling a correct and complete notice with the department.

(c) A certificate of water right may not be issued until a correct and complete notice has been filed with the department, including proof of landowner notification or a written federal special use authorization as necessary under subsection (1). The original of the certificate must be sent to the appropriator. The department shall keep a copy of the certificate in its office in Helena. The date of filing of the notice of completion is the date of priority of the right.

(4) An appropriator of ground water by means of a well or developed spring first put to beneficial use between January 1, 1962, and July 1, 1973, who did not file a notice of completion, as required by laws in force prior to April 14, 1981, with the county clerk and recorder shall file a notice of completion, as provided in subsection (3), with the department to perfect the water right. The filing of a claim pursuant to 85-2-221 is sufficient notice of completion under this subsection. The priority date of the appropriation is the date of the filing of a notice, as provided in subsection (3), or the date of the filing of the claim of existing water right.

(5) An appropriation under subsection (4) is an existing right, and a permit is not required. However, the department shall acknowledge the receipt of a correct and complete filing of a notice of completion, except that for an appropriation of 35

gallons a minute or less, not to exceed 10 acre-feet a year, the department shall issue a certificate of water right. If a certificate is issued under this section, a certificate need not be issued under the adjudication proceedings provided for in 85-2-236.

(6) A permit is not required before constructing an impoundment or pit and appropriating water for use by livestock if:

(a) the maximum capacity of the impoundment or pit is less than 15 acre-feet;

(b) the appropriation is less than 30 acre-feet a year;

(c) the appropriation is from an ephemeral stream, an intermittent stream, or another source other than a perennial flowing stream; and

(d) the impoundment or pit is to be constructed on and will be accessible to a parcel of land that is owned or under the control of the applicant and that is 40 acres or larger.

(7) (a) Within 60 days after constructing an impoundment or pit, the appropriator shall apply for a permit as prescribed by this part. Subject to subsection (7)(b), upon receipt of a correct and complete application for a stock water provisional permit, the department shall automatically issue a provisional permit. If the department determines after a hearing that the rights of other appropriators have been or will be adversely affected, it may revoke the permit or require the permittee to modify the impoundment or pit and may then make the permit subject to terms, conditions, restrictions, or limitations that

it considers necessary to protect the rights of other appropriators. For purposes of an adverse effects determination identified in this subsection, the department may not consider adverse effects on any water right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-311.

(b) If the impoundment or pit is on national forest system lands, an application is not correct and complete under this section until the applicant has submitted proof of any written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of diversion, impoundment, storage, transportation, withdrawal, use, or distribution of water under the permit.

(8) A person may also appropriate water without applying for or prior to receiving a permit under rules adopted by the department under 85-2-113.

(9) Pursuant to 85-20-1902, the provisions of this section do not apply within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Indian reservation."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-306:*

x85-2-102 *	x85-2-113	x85-2-236	x85-2-302
x85-2-322	x85-2-330	x85-2-341	x85-2-343
x85-2-355	x85-2-381	x85-2-381	x85-2-381
x85-2-401	x85-20-601	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-1501
x85-20-1701	x85-20-1701	x85-20-1701	x85-20-1701
x85-20-1801	x85-20-1801	x85-20-1801	x85-20-1901 }

**Section 2.** Section 85-2-311, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-311. Criteria for issuance of permit.** (1) A permit may be issued under this part prior to the adjudication of existing water rights in a source of supply. In a permit proceeding under this part, there is no presumption that an applicant for a permit cannot meet the statutory criteria of this section prior to the adjudication of existing water rights pursuant to this chapter. In making a determination under this section, the department may not alter the terms and conditions of an existing water right or an issued certificate, permit, or state water reservation. Except as provided in subsections (3) and (4), the department shall issue a permit if the applicant proves by a preponderance of evidence that the following criteria are met:

(a) (i) there is water physically available at the proposed point of diversion in the amount that the applicant seeks to appropriate; and

(ii) water can reasonably be considered legally available during the period in which the applicant seeks to appropriate, in the amount requested, based on the records of the department and other evidence provided to the department. Legal availability is determined using an analysis involving the following factors:

(A) identification of physical water availability;

(B) identification of existing legal demands on the source of supply throughout the area of potential impact by the proposed use; and

(C) analysis of the evidence on physical water availability and the existing legal demands, including but not limited to a

comparison of the physical water supply at the proposed point of diversion with the existing legal demands on the supply of water.

(b) the water rights of a prior appropriator under an existing water right, a certificate, a permit, or a state water reservation will not be adversely affected. In this subsection (1)(b), adverse effect must be determined based on a consideration of an applicant's plan for the exercise of the permit that demonstrates that the applicant's use of the water will be controlled so the water right of a prior appropriator will be satisfied<sup>7</sup>. The applicant is not required to prove a lack of adverse effect for any water right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to subsection (9) in connection with a permit application.

(c) the proposed means of diversion, construction, and operation of the appropriation works are adequate;

(d) the proposed use of water is a beneficial use;

(e) the applicant has a possessory interest or the written consent of the person with the possessory interest in the property where the water is to be put to beneficial use, or if the proposed use has a point of diversion, conveyance, or place of use on national forest system lands, the applicant has any written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of diversion, impoundment, storage, transportation, withdrawal, use, or distribution of water under the permit;

(f) the water quality of a prior appropriator will not be adversely affected;

(g) the proposed use will be substantially in accordance with the classification of water set for the source of supply pursuant to 75-5-301(1); and

(h) the ability of a discharge permit holder to satisfy effluent limitations of a permit issued in accordance with Title 75, chapter 5, part 4, will not be adversely affected.

(2) The applicant is required to prove that the criteria in subsections (1)(f) through (1)(h) have been met only if a valid objection is filed. A valid objection must contain substantial credible information establishing to the satisfaction of the department that the criteria in subsection (1)(f), (1)(g), or (1)(h), as applicable, may not be met. For the criteria set forth in subsection (1)(g), only the department of environmental quality or a local water quality district established under Title 7, chapter 13, part 45, may file a valid objection.

(3) The department may not issue a permit for an appropriation of 4,000 or more acre-feet of water a year and 5.5 or more cubic feet per second of water unless the applicant proves by clear and convincing evidence that:

(a) the criteria in subsection (1) are met;

(b) the proposed appropriation is a reasonable use. A finding must be based on a consideration of the following:

(i) the existing demands on the state water supply, as well as projected demands, such as reservations of water for future beneficial purposes, including municipal water supplies, irrigation systems, and minimum streamflows for the protection of existing water rights and aquatic life;

- (ii) the benefits to the applicant and the state;
- (iii) the effects on the quantity and quality of water for existing beneficial uses in the source of supply;
- (iv) the availability and feasibility of using low-quality water for the purpose for which application has been made;
- (v) the effects on private property rights by any creation of or contribution to saline seep; and
- (vi) the probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed use of water as determined by the department pursuant to Title 75, chapter 1, or Title 75, chapter 20.

(4) (a) The state of Montana has long recognized the importance of conserving its public waters and the necessity to maintain adequate water supplies for the state's water requirements, including requirements for federal non-Indian and Indian reserved water rights held by the United States for federal reserved lands and in trust for the various Indian tribes within the state's boundaries. Although the state of Montana also recognizes that, under appropriate conditions, the out-of-state transportation and use of its public waters are not in conflict with the public welfare of its citizens or the conservation of its waters, the criteria in this subsection (4) must be met before out-of-state use may occur.

(b) The department may not issue a permit for the appropriation of water for withdrawal and transportation for use outside the state unless the applicant proves by clear and convincing evidence that:

- (i) depending on the volume of water diverted or consumed,

the applicable criteria and procedures of subsection (1) or (3) are met;

(ii) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not contrary to water conservation in Montana; and

(iii) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not otherwise detrimental to the public welfare of the citizens of Montana.

(c) In determining whether the applicant has proved by clear and convincing evidence that the requirements of subsections (4)(b)(ii) and (4)(b)(iii) are met, the department shall consider the following factors:

(i) whether there are present or projected water shortages within the state of Montana;

(ii) whether the water that is the subject of the application could feasibly be transported to alleviate water shortages within the state of Montana;

(iii) the supply and sources of water available to the applicant in the state where the applicant intends to use the water; and

(iv) the demands placed on the applicant's supply in the state where the applicant intends to use the water.

(d) When applying for a permit or a lease to withdraw and transport water for use outside the state, the applicant shall submit to and comply with the laws of the state of Montana governing the appropriation, lease, and use of water.

(5) Subject to 85-2-360, to meet the preponderance of evidence standard in this section, the applicant, in addition to

other evidence demonstrating that the criteria of subsection (1) have been met, shall submit hydrologic or other evidence, including but not limited to water supply data, field reports, and other information developed by the applicant, the department, the U.S. geological survey, or the U.S. natural resources conservation service and other specific field studies.

(6) An appropriation, diversion, impoundment, use, restraint, or attempted appropriation, diversion, impoundment, use, or restraint contrary to the provisions of this section is invalid. An officer, agent, agency, or employee of the state may not knowingly permit, aid, or assist in any manner an unauthorized appropriation, diversion, impoundment, use, or other restraint. A person or corporation may not, directly or indirectly, personally or through an agent, officer, or employee, attempt to appropriate, divert, impound, use, or otherwise restrain or control waters within the boundaries of this state except in accordance with this section.

(7) The department may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

(8) For an application for ground water in a basin closed pursuant to 85-2-319, 85-2-321, 85-2-330, 85-2-336, 85-2-341, 85-2-343, or 85-2-344, the applicant shall comply with the provisions of 85-2-360 in addition to the requirements of this section.

(9) The department may not conduct adverse effects analysis on a water right if the water right holder files written consent to approval of an application for a permit."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-311:*

x85-2-102 *	x85-2-141	x85-2-308	x85-2-309
x85-2-310	x85-2-312	x85-2-313	x85-2-314
x85-2-314	x85-2-317	x85-2-322	x85-2-323
x85-2-708	x85-2-708	x85-20-1301	x85-20-1401 }

**Section 3.** Section 85-2-316, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-316. State reservation of waters.** (1) The state, any political subdivision or agency of the state, or the United States or any agency of the United States may apply to the department to acquire a state water reservation for existing or future beneficial uses or to maintain a minimum flow, level, or quality of water throughout the year or at periods or for a length of time that the department designates.

(2) (a) Water may be reserved for existing or future beneficial uses in the basin where it is reserved, as described by the following basins:

(i) the Clark Fork River and its tributaries to its confluence with Lake Pend Oreille in Idaho;

(ii) the Kootenai River and its tributaries to its confluence with Kootenay Lake in British Columbia;

(iii) the St. Mary River and its tributaries to its confluence with the Oldman River in Alberta;

(iv) the Little Missouri River and its tributaries to its confluence with Lake Sakakawea in North Dakota;

(v) the Missouri River and its tributaries to its confluence with the Yellowstone River in North Dakota; and

(vi) the Yellowstone River and its tributaries to its confluence with the Missouri River in North Dakota.

(b) A state water reservation may be made for an existing or future beneficial use outside the basin where the diversion occurs only if stored water is not reasonably available for water leasing under 85-2-141 and the proposed use would occur in a basin designated in subsection (2)(a).

(3) (a) The department shall adopt rules that are necessary to determine whether or not an application is correct and complete based on the provisions applicable to issuance of a state water reservation. The rules must be adopted in compliance with Title 2, chapter 4.

(b) An applicant shall submit a correct and complete application. The determination of whether an application is correct and complete must be based on rules adopted under this subsection (3) that are in effect at the time the application is submitted. The department shall proceed in accordance with 85-2-302 with regard to any defects in the application.

(c) The application must be made on a form prescribed by the department. The department shall make the forms available through its offices.

(d) Upon receiving a correct and complete application, the department shall proceed in accordance with 85-2-307 through 85-2-309. After the hearing provided for in 85-2-309, the department shall decide whether to reserve the water for the applicant. The department's costs of giving notice, holding the hearing, conducting investigations, and making records incurred in acting upon the application to reserve water, except the cost of salaries of the department's personnel, must be paid by the

applicant. In addition, a reasonable proportion of the department's cost of preparing an environmental analysis must be paid by the applicant unless waived by the department upon a showing of good cause by the applicant.

(4) (a) Except as provided in 85-20-1401, the department shall issue a state water reservation if the applicant establishes to the department by a preponderance of evidence:

- (i) the purpose of the reservation;
- (ii) the need for the reservation;
- (iii) the amount of water necessary for the purpose of the reservation;
- (iv) that the reservation is in the public interest.

(b) In determining the public interest under subsection (4) (a) (iv), the department shall issue a water reservation for withdrawal and transport for use outside the state if the applicant proves by clear and convincing evidence that:

- (i) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not contrary to water conservation in Montana; and
- (ii) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not otherwise detrimental to the public welfare of the citizens of Montana.

(c) In determining whether the applicant has proved by clear and convincing evidence that the requirements of subsections (4) (b) (i) and (4) (b) (ii) are met, the department shall consider the following factors:

- (i) whether there are present or projected water shortages within the state of Montana;
- (ii) whether the water that is the subject of the

application could feasibly be transported to alleviate water shortages within the state of Montana;

(iii) the supply and sources of water available to the applicant in the state where the applicant intends to use the water; and

(iv) the demands placed on the applicant's supply in the state where the applicant intends to use the water.

(d) When applying for a state water reservation to withdraw and transport water for use outside the state, the applicant shall submit to and comply with the laws of the state of Montana governing the appropriation, lease, use, and reservation of water.

(5) If the purpose of the state water reservation requires construction of a storage or diversion facility, the applicant shall establish to the department by a preponderance of evidence that there will be progress toward completion of the facility and accomplishment of the purpose with reasonable diligence in accordance with an established plan.

(6) (a) Upon issuing a state water reservation for the purpose of maintaining a minimum flow, level, or quality of water, the appropriation of water is complete.

(b) The department shall limit any state water reservations after May 9, 1979, for maintenance of minimum flow, level, or quality of water that it awards at any point on a stream or river to a maximum of 50% of the average annual flow of record on gauged streams. Ungauged streams are not subject to the limit under this subsection (6)(b).

(7) A state water reservation issued under this section has a priority of appropriation dating from the filing of a correct and complete application with the department.

(8) (a) A person desiring to use water reserved to a conservation district for agricultural purposes shall make application for the use with the district, and the district, upon approval of the application, shall inform the department of the approved use and issue the applicant an authorization for the use. The department shall maintain records of all uses of water reserved to conservation districts and be responsible, when requested by the districts, for rendering technical and administrative assistance within the department's staffing and budgeting limitations in the preparation and processing of the applications for the conservation districts. The department shall, within its staffing and budgeting limitations, complete any feasibility study requested by the districts within 12 months of the time that the request was made. The department shall extend the time allowed to develop a plan identifying projects for using a district's reservation as long as the conservation district makes a good faith effort, within its staffing and budget limitations, to develop a plan.

(b) Upon actual application of water to the proposed beneficial use, the authorized user shall notify the conservation district. The notification must contain a certified statement by a person with experience in the design, construction, or operation of project works for agricultural purposes describing how the reserved water was put to use. The department or the

district may then inspect the appropriation to determine if it has been completed in substantial accordance with the authorization.

(9) A state water reservation issued under this section may not adversely affect any rights in existence at that time except for any water right for which written consent to approval has been filed pursuant to 85-2-311 in connection with the reservation. The department may issue a state water reservation subject to terms, conditions, restrictions, and limitations it considers necessary to satisfy the criteria of this section.

(10) (a) Except for a reservation provided in subsection (6) or a reservation provided in 85-20-1401, the department shall, at least once every 10 years, review existing state water reservations to ensure that the objectives of the reservations are being met.

(b) An existing state water reservation subject to the review in subsection (10) (a) that was not reviewed in the 10 years prior to April 23, 2015, must be reviewed by July 1, 2016. The department shall provide the water policy interim committee, established in 5-5-231, a summary of the reviews before September 15, 2016.

(c) Following a review pursuant to this subsection (10), at the request of the entity holding a water reservation or when the objectives of a state water reservation are not being met, the department may:

(i) extend the time period to complete the appropriation of water;

- (ii) modify the reservation; or
- (iii) revoke the reservation.

(d) Any undeveloped water made available as a result of a revocation or modification under this subsection (10) is available for appropriation by others pursuant to this part.

(11) Except as provided in 85-20-1401, the department may modify an existing or future order originally adopted to reserve water for the purpose of maintaining minimum flow, level, or quality of water, so as to reallocate the state water reservation or portion of the reservation to an applicant who is a qualified reservant under this section. Reallocation of water reserved pursuant to a state water reservation may be made by the department following notice and hearing if the department finds that all or part of the reservation is not required for its purpose and that the need for the reallocation has been shown by the applicant to outweigh the need shown by the original reservant. Reallocation of reserved water may not adversely affect the priority date of the reservation, and the reservation retains its priority date despite reallocation to a different entity for a different use. The department may not reallocate water reserved under this section on any stream or river more frequently than once every 5 years.

(12) A reservant may not make a change in a state water reservation under this section, except as permitted under 85-2-402 and this subsection. If the department approves a change, the department shall give notice and require the reservant to establish that the criteria in subsection (4) will

be met under the approved change.

(13) A state water reservation may be transferred to another entity qualified to hold a reservation under subsection (1). Only the entity holding the reservation may initiate a transfer. The transfer occurs upon the filing of a water right ownership update form with the department, together with an affidavit from the entity receiving the reservation establishing that the entity is a qualified reservant under subsection (1), that the entity agrees to comply with the requirements of this section and the conditions of the reservation, and that the entity can meet the objectives of the reservation as granted. If the transfer of a state water reservation involves a change in an appropriation right, the necessary approvals must be acquired pursuant to subsection (12).

(14) This section does not vest the department with the authority to alter a water right that is not a state water reservation.

(15) The department shall undertake a program to educate the public, other state agencies, and political subdivisions of the state as to the benefits of the state water reservation process and the procedures to be followed to secure the reservation of water. The department shall provide technical assistance to other state agencies and political subdivisions in applying for reservations under this section.

(16) Water reserved under this section is not subject to the state water leasing program established under 85-2-141."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-316:*

x85-1-610	x85-2-102	x85-2-232	x85-2-233
x85-2-307	x85-2-308	x85-2-309	x85-2-329
x85-2-331	x85-2-331	x85-2-331	x85-2-336
x85-2-336	x85-2-340	x85-2-342	x85-2-344
x85-2-602	x85-2-603	x85-2-605	x85-2-605
x85-20-501	x85-20-501	x85-20-501	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901	x85-20-901
x85-20-901	x85-20-1401	x85-20-1401	x85-20-1401
x85-20-1401	x85-20-1401	x85-20-1401	}

**Section 4.** Section 85-2-319, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-319. Permit action in highly appropriated basins or subbasins.** (1) With regard to a highly appropriated basin or subbasin, except as provided in 85-20-1401, the legislature may by law preclude permit applications or the department may by rule reject permit applications or modify or condition permits already issued.

(2) A rule may be adopted under this section only upon a petition that is signed by at least 25% or 10, whichever is less, of the users of water in the source of supply within a basin or subbasin or upon petition of the department of environmental quality that alleges facts under subsection (2)(d). The petition must be in a form prescribed by the department and must allege facts showing that throughout or at certain times of the year or for certain beneficial uses:

(a) there are no unappropriated waters in the source of supply;

(b) the rights of a prior appropriators appropriator will be adversely affected unless the prior appropriator has filed written consent to approval pursuant to 85-2-311 in connection with the permit application;

(c) further uses will interfere unreasonably with other planned uses or developments for which a permit has been issued or for which water has been reserved; or

(d) in the case of a petition filed by the department of environmental quality:

(i) the water quality of an appropriator will be adversely affected by the issuance of permits;

(ii) further use will not be substantially in accordance with the classification of water set for the source of supply pursuant to 75-5-301(1); or

(iii) the ability of a discharge permit holder to satisfy effluent limitations of a permit issued in accordance with Title 75, chapter 5, part 4, will be adversely affected by the issuance of permits.

(3) Within 60 days after submission of a petition, the department shall:

(a) deny the petition in writing, stating its reasons for denial;

(b) inform the petitioners that the department shall study the allegations further before denying or proceeding further with the petition; or

(c) initiate rulemaking proceedings in accordance with 2-4-302 through 2-4-305.

(4) Title 2, chapter 4, parts 1 through 4, govern rulemaking proceedings conducted under this section, except that in addition to the notice requirements of those parts, the department notice of the rulemaking hearing must be published at

least once in each week for 3 successive weeks, not less than 30 days before the date of the hearing, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county or counties in which the source is located. The department shall serve by mail a copy of the notice, not less than 30 days before the hearing, upon each person or public agency known from the examination of the records of the department to be a claimant, appropriator, or permitholder of water in the source.

(5) The department may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-319:*

x85-2-112	x85-2-113	x85-2-311	x85-2-330
x85-2-336	x85-2-341	x85-2-343	x85-2-344
x85-2-360	x85-2-380	}	

**Section 5.** Section 85-2-320, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-320. Change in appropriation right authorization for instream flow -- United States department of agriculture, forest service.** (1) (a) The department shall accept and process an application by the United States department of agriculture, forest service for a change in appropriation right under the provisions of 85-2-402 and this section to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery or other resources on national forest system lands.

(b) To change an appropriation right, the United States department of agriculture, forest service must own the appropriation right that it seeks to change to an instream flow right, the diversion or withdrawal that is to be changed to

instream flow must be located within or immediately adjacent to the exterior boundaries of national forest system lands on the date provided in 85-20-1401, Article IV.B.2., and the stream reach in which the streamflow is to be protected, maintained, or enhanced must be located within or immediately adjacent to the exterior boundaries of national forest system lands as of the date provided in 85-20-1401, Article IV.B.2. The application for a change in appropriation right must:

(i) include specific information on the length and location of the stream reach in which the streamflow is to be protected, maintained, or enhanced; and

(ii) provide a detailed streamflow measuring plan that describes the point where and the manner in which the streamflow must be measured.

(2) In addition to the requirements of 85-2-402, when applying for a change in appropriation right pursuant to this section, the United States department of agriculture, forest service, shall prove by a preponderance of the evidence that:

(a) the change in appropriation right authorization to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery or other resources, as measured at a specific point, will not adversely affect the water rights of other persons, except for a water right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with the change in appropriation right; and

(b) the amount of water for the proposed instream flow use is needed to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit

the fishery or other resources.

(3) The proposed method of measurement of the water to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery or other resources must be approved by the department before a change in appropriation right may be approved.

(4) The department is not responsible for costs associated with installing devices or providing personnel to measure streamflows according to the measurement plan submitted under this section.

(5) If an appropriation right is changed pursuant to this section, the priority of the appropriation right remains the same as the appropriation right that was changed.

(6) A change in appropriation right authorization under this section does not create a right of access across private property or allow any infringement of private property rights.

(7) The maximum quantity of water that may be subject to a change in appropriation right authorization to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery or other resources is the amount historically diverted. However, only the amount historically consumed or a smaller amount if specified by the department in the change in appropriation right authorization may be used to protect, maintain, or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery or other resources below the existing point of diversion.

(8) The department may modify or revoke the change in appropriation right up to 10 years after it is approved if an appropriator with a priority of appropriation that is earlier

than the change in appropriation right that was granted submits new evidence that was not available at the time the change in appropriation right was approved that proves by a preponderance of evidence that the prior appropriator's water right is adversely affected, unless the prior appropriator has filed written consent to approval pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with the change."

{ Internal References to 85-2-320:

x85-2-102      x85-2-308      x85-2-402      x85-2-402  
x85-2-402      x85-20-1401 }

**Section 6.** Section 85-2-321, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-321. Milk River basin -- suspension of action on permits -- proposal -- priority in adjudication process.** (1) (a)

In order to balance the need for the continued development of Montana's water and for protection of existing rights in the Milk River basin, the department may suspend action on a class of applications or may close a source in the basin and refuse to accept a class of applications, or both, for a permit under this part to appropriate from that source in the basin.

(b) Suspension or closure, or both, may only be proposed by the department.

(c) The proposal must state the source in the basin and class of applications for which suspension or closure, or both, is being proposed and any of the following allegations:

(i) that the frequency of occurrence of unappropriated waters is such that:

(A) any new appropriation from the source for the class of

applications will adversely affect the rights of a prior appropriation from the source, unless the prior appropriator has filed written consent to approval pursuant to 85-2-311 in connection with the new appropriation application; or

(B) any new appropriation from the source for the class of applications will interfere unreasonably with another planned use or development for which a permit has been given or for which water has been reserved pursuant to this part in the source; or

(ii) that significant disputes or enforcement problems regarding priority of rights or amounts or duration of water in use by appropriators are in progress or will arise.

(2) After April 8, 1985, the chief water judge shall make issuance of a temporary preliminary decree in the Milk River basin the highest priority in the adjudication of existing water rights pursuant to Title 85, chapter 2, part 2."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-321:*

x85-2-311      x85-2-322      x85-2-322      x85-2-323  
x85-2-360      x85-2-380 }

**Section 7.** Section 85-2-360, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-360. Ground water appropriation right in closed basins.** (1) An application for a ground water appropriation right in a basin closed pursuant to 85-2-319, 85-2-321, 85-2-330, 85-2-336, 85-2-341, 85-2-343, or 85-2-344 must be accompanied by a hydrogeologic report conducted pursuant to 85-2-361, an aquifer recharge or mitigation plan if required, and an application for a change in appropriation right or rights if necessary.

(2) The department shall use the hydrogeologic report to

determine if the proposed appropriation right could result in a net depletion of surface water.

(3) (a) For the purposes of 85-2-360 through 85-2-362, the prediction of net depletion does not mean that an adverse effect on a prior appropriator will occur or if an adverse effect does occur that the entire amount of net depletion is the cause of the adverse effect. A determination of whether or not there is an adverse effect on a prior appropriator as the result of a new appropriation right is a determination that must be made by the department based on the rate, location, and timing of the net depletion that causes the adverse effect relative to the historic beneficial use of the appropriation right that may be adversely affected.

(b) The department may not consider an adverse effect caused by the grant of an application pursuant to this section on any water right listed on a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-311.

~~(b)~~(c) The department may grant a permit for a new appropriation only if the applicant proves by a preponderance of the evidence that the adverse effect would be offset through an aquifer recharge or mitigation plan that meets the requirements of 85-2-362."

{ Internal References to 85-2-360:

x85-2-311	x85-2-311	x85-2-330	x85-2-336
x85-2-341	x85-2-343	x85-2-344	x85-2-360 *
x85-2-364	x85-2-364	x85-2-368 *	x85-2-370 *
x85-2-370 *	}		

**Section 8.** Section 85-2-402, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-402. Changes in appropriation rights -- definition.**

(1) (a) The right to make a change in appropriation right subject to the provisions of this section in an existing water right, a permit, or a state water reservation is recognized and confirmed. In a change in appropriation right proceeding under this section, there is no presumption that an applicant for a change in appropriation right cannot establish lack of adverse effect prior to the adjudication of other rights in the source of supply pursuant to this chapter. Except as provided in 85-2-410 and subsections (15) and (16) of this section, an appropriator may not make a change in an appropriation right without the approval of the department or, if applicable, of the legislature. An applicant shall submit a correct and complete application.

(b) If an application involves a change in a point of diversion, conveyance, or place of use located on national forest system lands, the application is not correct and complete until the applicant has submitted proof to the department of any written special use authorization required by federal law for the proposed change in occupancy, use, or traverse of national forest system lands for the purpose of diversion, impoundment, storage, transportation, withdrawal, use, or distribution of water.

(c) The applicant is not required to prove a lack of adverse effect for any water right identified on a written consent to approval filed pursuant to subsection (19) in connection with an application.

(2) Except as provided in subsections (4) through (6), (15), (16), and (18) and, if applicable, subject to ~~subsection~~

~~(17)~~ subsections (1)(c) and (17), the department shall approve a change in appropriation right if the appropriator proves by a preponderance of evidence that the following criteria are met:

(a) The proposed change in appropriation right will not adversely affect the use of the existing water rights of other persons or other perfected or planned uses or developments for which a permit or certificate has been issued or for which a state water reservation has been issued under part 3.

(b) The proposed means of diversion, construction, and operation of the appropriation works are adequate, except for:

(i) a change in appropriation right for instream flow pursuant to 85-2-320 or 85-2-436;

(ii) a temporary change in appropriation right for instream flow pursuant to 85-2-408; or

(iii) a change in appropriation right pursuant to 85-2-420 for mitigation or marketing for mitigation.

(c) The proposed use of water is a beneficial use.

(d) The applicant has a possessory interest, or the written consent of the person with the possessory interest, in the property where the water is to be put to beneficial use or, if the proposed change involves a point of diversion, conveyance, or place of use on national forest system lands, the applicant has any written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of diversion, impoundment, storage, transportation, withdrawal, use, or distribution of water. This subsection (2)(d) does not apply to:

(i) a change in appropriation right for instream flow pursuant to 85-2-320 or 85-2-436;

(ii) a temporary change in appropriation right for instream flow pursuant to 85-2-408; or

(iii) a change in appropriation right pursuant to 85-2-420 for mitigation or marketing for mitigation.

(e) If the change in appropriation right involves salvaged water, the proposed water-saving methods will salvage at least the amount of water asserted by the applicant.

(f) The water quality of an appropriator will not be adversely affected.

(g) The ability of a discharge permit holder to satisfy effluent limitations of a permit issued in accordance with Title 75, chapter 5, part 4, will not be adversely affected.

(3) The applicant is required to prove that the criteria in subsections (2)(f) and (2)(g) have been met only if a valid objection is filed. A valid objection must contain substantial credible information establishing to the satisfaction of the department that the criteria in subsection (2)(f) or (2)(g), as applicable, may not be met.

(4) The department may not approve a change in purpose of use or place of use of an appropriation of 4,000 or more acre-feet of water a year and 5.5 or more cubic feet per second of water unless the appropriator proves by a preponderance of evidence that:

(a) the criteria in subsection (2) are met; and

(b) the proposed change in appropriation right is a

reasonable use. A finding of reasonable use must be based on a consideration of:

(i) the existing demands on the state water supply, as well as projected demands for water for future beneficial purposes, including municipal water supplies, irrigation systems, and minimum streamflows for the protection of existing water rights and aquatic life;

(ii) the benefits to the applicant and the state;

(iii) the effects on the quantity and quality of water for existing uses in the source of supply;

(iv) the availability and feasibility of using low-quality water for the purpose for which application has been made;

(v) the effects on private property rights by any creation of or contribution to saline seep; and

(vi) the probable significant adverse environmental impacts of the proposed use of water as determined by the department pursuant to Title 75, chapter 1, or Title 75, chapter 20.

(5) The department may not approve a change in purpose of use or place of use for a diversion that results in 4,000 or more acre-feet of water a year and 5.5 or more cubic feet per second of water being consumed unless:

(a) the applicant proves by clear and convincing evidence and the department finds that the criteria in subsections (2) and (4) are met; and

(b) for the withdrawal and transportation of appropriated water for out-of-state use, the department then petitions the legislature and the legislature affirms the decision of the

department after one or more public hearings.

(6) The state of Montana has long recognized the importance of conserving its public waters and the necessity to maintain adequate water supplies for the state's water requirements, including requirements for federal non-Indian and Indian reserved water rights held by the United States for federal reserved lands and in trust for the various Indian tribes within the state's boundaries. Although the state of Montana also recognizes that, under appropriate conditions, the out-of-state transportation and use of its public waters are not in conflict with the public welfare of its citizens or the conservation of its waters, the following criteria must be met before out-of-state use may occur:

(a) The department and, if applicable, the legislature may not approve a change in appropriation right for the withdrawal and transportation of appropriated water for use outside the state unless the appropriator proves by clear and convincing evidence and, if applicable, the legislature approves after one or more public hearings that:

(i) depending on the volume of water diverted or consumed, the applicable criteria and procedures of subsection (2) or (4) are met;

(ii) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not contrary to water conservation in Montana; and

(iii) the proposed out-of-state use of water is not otherwise detrimental to the public welfare of the citizens of Montana.

(b) In determining whether the appropriator has proved by

clear and convincing evidence that the requirements of subsections (6)(a)(ii) and (6)(a)(iii) will be met, the department and, if applicable, the legislature shall consider the following factors:

(i) whether there are present or projected water shortages within the state of Montana;

(ii) whether the water that is the subject of the proposed change in appropriation might feasibly be transported to alleviate water shortages within the state of Montana;

(iii) the supply and sources of water available to the applicant in the state where the applicant intends to use the water; and

(iv) the demands placed on the applicant's supply in the state where the applicant intends to use the water.

(c) When applying for a change in appropriation right to withdraw and transport water for use outside the state, the applicant shall submit to and comply with the laws of the state of Montana governing the appropriation and use of water.

(7) For any application for a change in appropriation right involving 4,000 or more acre-feet of water a year and 5.5 or more cubic feet per second of water, the department shall give notice of the proposed change in appropriation right in accordance with 85-2-307 and shall hold one or more hearings in accordance with 85-2-309 prior to its approval or denial of the proposed change in appropriation right. The department shall provide notice and may hold one or more hearings upon any other proposed change in appropriation right if it determines that the proposed change in

appropriation right might adversely affect the rights of other persons, except for any right for which written consent to approval has been filed pursuant to subsection (19) in connection with the application.

(8) The department or the legislature, if applicable, may approve a change in appropriation right subject to the terms, conditions, restrictions, and limitations that it considers necessary to satisfy the criteria of this section, including limitations on the time for completion of the change in appropriation right. The department may extend time limits specified in the change in appropriation right approval under the applicable criteria and procedures of 85-2-312.

(9) Upon actual application of water to the proposed beneficial use within the time allowed, the appropriator shall notify the department that the appropriation has been completed. The notification must contain a certified statement by a person with experience in the design, construction, or operation of appropriation works describing how the appropriation was completed.

(10) If a change in appropriation right is not completed as approved by the department or legislature or if the terms, conditions, restrictions, and limitations of the change in appropriation right approval are not complied with, the department may, after notice and opportunity for hearing, require the appropriator to show cause why the change in appropriation right approval should not be modified or revoked. If the appropriator fails to show sufficient cause, the department may

modify or revoke the change in appropriation right approval.

(11) The original of a change in appropriation right approval issued by the department must be sent to the applicant, and a duplicate must be kept in the office of the department in Helena.

(12) A person holding an issued permit or change in appropriation right approval that has not been perfected may change the place of diversion, place of use, purpose of use, or place of storage by filing an application for change in appropriation right pursuant to this section.

(13) A change in appropriation right contrary to the provisions of this section is invalid. An officer, agent, agency, or employee of the state may not knowingly permit, aid, or assist in any manner an unauthorized change in appropriation right. A person or corporation may not, directly or indirectly, personally or through an agent, officer, or employee, attempt to change an appropriation right except in accordance with this section.

(14) The department may adopt rules to implement the provisions of this section.

(15) (a) An appropriator may change an appropriation right for a replacement well without the prior approval of the department if:

(i) the appropriation right is for:

(A) ground water outside the boundaries of a controlled ground water area; or

(B) ground water inside the boundaries of a controlled ground water area and if the provisions of the rule establishing

the controlled ground water area do not restrict a change in appropriation right;

(ii) the change in appropriation right is to replace an existing well and the existing well will no longer be used;

(iii) the rate and volume of the appropriation from the replacement well are equal to or less than that of the well being replaced and do not exceed:

(A) 450 gallons a minute for a municipal well; or

(B) 35 gallons a minute and 10 acre-feet a year for all other wells;

(iv) the water from the replacement well is appropriated from the same aquifer as the water appropriated from the well being replaced; and

(v) a timely, correct and complete notice of replacement well is submitted to the department as provided in subsection (15) (b) .

(b) (i) After completion of a replacement well and appropriation of ground water for a beneficial use, the appropriator shall file a notice of replacement well with the department on a form provided by the department.

(ii) (A) The department shall review the notice of replacement well and shall issue an authorization of a change in an appropriation right if all of the criteria in subsection (15) (a) have been met and the notice is correct and complete.

(B) If the replacement well is located on national forest system lands, the notice is not correct and complete under this subsection (15) until the appropriator has submitted proof of any

written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of constructing the replacement well.

(iii) The department may not issue an authorization of a change in appropriation right until a correct and complete notice of replacement well has been filed with the department. The department shall return a defective notice to the appropriator, along with a description of defects in the notice. The appropriator shall refile a corrected and completed notice of replacement well within 30 days of notification of defects or within a further time as the department may allow, not to exceed 6 months.

(iv) If a notice of replacement well is not completed within the time allowed, the appropriator shall:

(A) cease appropriation of water from the replacement well pending approval by the department; and

(B) submit an application for a change in appropriation right to the department pursuant to subsections (1) through (3).

(c) The provisions of this subsection (15) do not apply to an appropriation right abandoned under 85-2-404.

(d) For each well that is replaced under this subsection (15), the appropriator shall follow the well abandonment procedures, standards, and rules adopted by the board of water well contractors pursuant to 37-43-202.

(e) The provisions of subsections (2), (3), (9), and (10) do not apply to a change in appropriation right that meets the requirements of subsection (15)(a).

(16) (a) An appropriator may change an appropriation right without the prior approval of the department for the purpose of constructing a redundant water supply well in a public water supply system, as defined in 75-6-102, if the redundant water supply well:

(i) withdraws water from the same ground water source as the original well; and

(ii) is required by a state or federal agency.

(b) The priority date of the redundant water supply well is the same as the priority date of the original well. Only one well may be used at one time.

(c) Within 60 days of completion of a redundant water supply well, the appropriator shall file a notice of construction of the well with the department on a form provided by the department. The department may return a defective notice of construction to the appropriator for correction and completion. If the redundant water supply well is located on national forest system lands, the notice is not correct and complete under this subsection until the appropriator has submitted proof of any written special use authorization required by federal law to occupy, use, or traverse national forest system lands for the purpose of constructing the redundant water supply well.

(d) The provisions of subsections (9) and (10) do not apply to a change in appropriation right that meets the requirements of this subsection (16).

(17) The department shall accept and process an application for a change in appropriation right for instream flow to protect,

maintain, or enhance streamflows pursuant to 85-2-320 and this section and to benefit the fishery resource pursuant to 85-2-436 and this section.

(18) (a) An appropriator may change an appropriation right for a replacement point of diversion without the prior approval of the department if:

(i) the existing point of diversion is inoperable due to natural causes or deteriorated infrastructure;

(ii) there are no other changes to the water right;

(iii) the capacity of the diversion is not increased;

(iv) there are no points of diversion or intervening water rights between the existing point of diversion and the replacement point of diversion or the appropriator obtains written waivers from all intervening water right holders;

(v) the replacement point of diversion is on the same surface water source and is located as close as reasonably practicable to the existing point of diversion;

(vi) the replacement point of diversion replaces an existing point of diversion and the existing point of diversion will no longer be used;

(vii) the appropriator can show that the existing point of diversion has been used in the 10 years prior to the notice for change of appropriation right for a replacement point of diversion;

(viii) the appropriator can show the change will not increase access to water availability, change the method of irrigation, if applicable, or increase the amount of water

diverted, used, or consumed; and

(ix) a timely, correct and complete notice of replacement point of diversion is submitted to the department as provided in subsection (18)(b).

(b) (i) Within 60 days after completion of a replacement point of diversion, the appropriator shall file a notice of replacement point of diversion with the department on a form provided by the department.

(ii) The department shall review the notice of replacement point of diversion and shall issue an authorization of a change in an appropriation right if all of the criteria in subsection (18)(a) have been met and the notice is correct and complete. The department may inspect the diversion to confirm that the criteria under subsection (18)(a) have been met. If the department issues an authorization of a change in an appropriation right for a replacement point of diversion, the department shall prepare a notice of the authorization and provide notice of the authorization in the same manner as required in 85-2-307 for applications.

(iii) The department may not issue an authorization of a change in appropriation right until a correct and complete notice of replacement point of diversion has been filed with the department. The department shall return a defective notice to the appropriator, along with a description of defects in the notice. The appropriator shall refile a corrected and completed notice of replacement point of diversion within 30 days of notification of defects or within a further time as the department may allow, not

to exceed 6 months.

(iv) If a notice of replacement point of diversion is not filed and completed within the time allowed or if the department determines the criteria under subsection (18) (a) have not been met, the appropriator shall:

(A) cease appropriation of water from the replacement point of diversion pending approval by the department; and

(B) submit an application for a change in appropriation right to the department pursuant to subsections (1) through (3).

(c) The provisions of this subsection (18) do not apply to an appropriation right abandoned under 85-2-404.

(d) The provisions of subsections (2), (3), (9), and (10) do not apply to a change in appropriation right that meets the requirements of subsection (18) (a).

(e) (i) An appropriator may file a correct and complete objection with the department alleging that the change in appropriation right for a replacement point of diversion will adversely affect the use of the existing water rights of other persons or other perfected or planned uses or developments for which a permit or certificate has been issued or for which a state water reservation has been issued under Title 85, chapter 2, part 3.

(ii) If the department determines after a contested case hearing between the appropriator and the objector that the rights of other appropriators have been or will be adversely affected, it may revoke the change or make the change subject to terms, conditions, restrictions, or limitations necessary to protect the

rights of other appropriators.

(iii) The burden of proof to prove lack of adverse effect at the hearing is on the appropriator changing the point of diversion.

(19) The department may not conduct adverse effects analysis on a water right if the water right holder files written consent to approval of an application for a change in appropriation right."

{ Internal References to 85-2-402:

x3-7-224	x75-5-410	x85-2-308	x85-2-309
x85-2-310	x85-2-314	x85-2-314	x85-2-316
x85-2-320	x85-2-320	x85-2-336	x85-2-368
x85-2-403	x85-2-407	x85-2-408	x85-2-408
x85-2-419	x85-2-420	x85-2-427	x85-2-427
x85-2-436	x85-2-436	x85-2-436	x85-2-602
x85-2-708	x85-20-1001	x85-20-1401	x85-20-1501
x85-20-1501	x85-20-1501	x85-20-1901	x85-20-1901
x85-20-1901	}		

**Section 9.** Section 85-2-407, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-407. Temporary changes in appropriation right. (1)**

Except as provided in 85-2-410, an appropriator may not make a temporary change in appropriation right for the appropriator's use or another's use except with department approval in accordance with 85-2-402 and this section.

(2) Except as provided in subsection (9), a temporary change in appropriation right may be approved for a period not to exceed 10 years. A temporary change in appropriation right may be approved for consecutive or intermittent use.

(3) An authorization for a temporary change in appropriation right may be renewed by the department for a period

not to exceed 10 years. There is no limitation on the number of renewals the appropriator may seek. Renewal of an authorization for a temporary change in appropriation right requires notice to the department by the appropriator. Upon receipt of the notice, the department shall notify other appropriators potentially affected by the renewal and shall allow 90 days for submission of new evidence of adverse effects to other water rights. A temporary change authorization may not be renewed by the department if it determines that the right of an appropriator, ~~other than an appropriator described in subsection (7),~~ is adversely affected, except for an appropriator described in subsection (7) or a right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with a temporary change.

(4) (a) During the term of the original temporary change authorization, the department may modify or revoke its authorization for a temporary change if it determines that the right of an appropriator, ~~other than an appropriator described in subsection (7),~~ is adversely affected, except for an appropriator described in subsection (7) or a right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with a temporary change.

(b) An appropriator, other than an appropriator identified in subsection (7) may object:

(i) during the initial temporary change application process;

(ii) during the temporary change renewal process; and

(iii) once during the term of the temporary change permit.

(5) The priority of appropriation for a temporary change in appropriation right is the same as the priority of appropriation of the right that is temporarily changed.

(6) Neither a change in appropriation right nor any other authorization right is required for reversion of the appropriation right to the permanent purpose, place of use, point of diversion, or place of storage after the period for which a temporary change was authorized expires.

(7) A person issued a water use permit with a priority of appropriation after the date of filing of an application for a temporary change in appropriation right under this section may not object to the exercise of the temporary change according to its terms, the renewal of the authorization for the temporary change, or the reversion of the appropriation right to its permanent purpose, place of use, point of diversion, or place of storage. Persons described in this subsection must be notified of the existence of any temporary change authorizations from the same source of supply.

(8) If a water right for which a temporary change in appropriation right has been approved is transferred as an appurtenance of real property, the temporary change remains in effect unless another change in appropriation right is authorized by the department.

(9) If the quantity of water that is subject to a temporary change in appropriation right is made available from the development of a new water conservation or storage project, a

temporary change in appropriation right may be approved for a period not to exceed 30 years unless a renewal is obtained pursuant to subsection (3)."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-407:*

x85-2-308      x85-2-404      x85-2-408      x85-2-408  
x85-2-427      x85-20-1501      x85-20-1501      x85-20-1901  
x85-20-1901 }

**Section 10.** Section 85-2-408, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-408. Temporary change authorization for instream flow -- additional requirements.** (1) The department shall accept and process an application for a temporary change in appropriation rights to maintain or enhance instream flow to benefit the fishery resource under the provisions of 85-2-402, 85-2-407, and this section. The application must:

(a) include specific information on the length and location of the stream reach in which the streamflow is to be maintained or enhanced; and

(b) provide a detailed streamflow measuring plan that describes the point where and the manner in which the streamflow must be measured.

(2) (a) A temporary change authorization under the provisions of this section is allowable only if the owner of the water right voluntarily agrees to:

(i) change the purpose of a consumptive use water right to instream flow for the benefit of the fishery resource; or

(ii) lease a consumptive use water right to another person for instream flow to benefit the fishery resource.

(b) For the purpose of this subsection (2), "person" means and is limited to an individual, association, partnership, or corporation.

(3) In addition to the requirements of 85-2-402 and 85-2-407, an applicant for a change authorization under this section shall prove by a preponderance of evidence that:

(a) the temporary change authorization for water to maintain and enhance instream flow to benefit the fishery resource, as measured at a specific point, will not adversely affect the water rights of other persons; and

(b) the amount of water for the proposed use is needed to maintain or enhance instream flows to benefit the fishery resource.

(4) The applicant is not required to prove a lack of adverse effect for any water right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with a change application.

~~(4)~~(5) The department shall approve the method of measurement of the water to maintain and enhance instream flow to benefit the fishery resource through a temporary change authorization as provided in this section.

~~(5)~~(6) Only the owner of the water right may seek enforcement of the temporary change authorization or object under 85-2-308.

~~(6)~~(7) A temporary change authorization under this section does not create a right of access across private property or allow any infringement of private property rights.

~~(7)~~(8) The maximum quantity of water that may be changed to maintain and enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery resource is the amount historically diverted. However, only the amount historically consumed, or a smaller amount if specified by the department in the lease authorization, may be used to maintain or enhance streamflows to benefit the fishery resource below the existing point of diversion."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-408:*

x85-2-102	x85-2-102	x85-2-308	x85-2-402
x85-2-402	x85-2-404	x85-2-419	x85-2-427
x85-20-1501	x85-20-1901	x85-20-1901	}

**Section 11.** Section 85-2-410, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-410. Short-term lease of appropriation right.** (1) An appropriator may lease for a term not to exceed 90 days all or part of an appropriation right for road construction or dust abatement without the prior approval of the department, subject to the requirements of this section. The lease agreement must include the following information:

- (a) the name and address of the lessee;
- (b) the name of the owner of the appropriation right;
- (c) the number of the appropriation right;
- (d) the purpose of use of water for which the lease is being made;
- (e) the source of water to be appropriated;
- (f) the starting and ending date of the proposed use of water;
- (g) the proposed point of diversion;

(h) the proposed place of use;

(i) the diversion flow rate and volume of water to be used during the period of use; and

(j) a description of how the existing use of water will be reduced to accommodate the temporary change of use of the appropriation right, including the number and location of acres to be removed from irrigation, if applicable.

(2) A short-term lease of an appropriation right under this section may not exceed 60,000 gallons a day or the amount of the appropriation right, whichever is less. Any combination of short-term leases cannot exceed 120,000 gallons a day for one project.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (9), the following information must be submitted to the department at least 2 days prior to the use of water by a lessee under this section:

(a) a copy of the publication notice or copies of the individual notice required under subsection (4);

(b) a copy of the lease agreement; and

(c) for a combination of short-term leases greater than 60,000 gallons a day for one project, an analysis by the lessee of any potential adverse effects and a description of planned actions to mitigate any potential adverse effects to appropriators in the area of the proposed point of diversion.

(4) Except as provided in subsection (9), the lessee of an appropriation right under this section shall, 30 days prior to the use of the water, publish a notice of the proposed use of water once in a newspaper of general circulation in the area of

the diversion or mail individual notice to potentially affected appropriators in the area of the proposed point of diversion. The published notice or the individual notice must contain the information listed in subsections (1)(a) through (1)(j) and (3)(c).

(5) (a) The owner of a water right, whether the right is prior or subsequent in priority to the short-term lease acquired by a person under this section, who cannot satisfy in full the owner's right during the time that the short-term lessee is diverting water may make a complaint to the department and cause the short-term lessee's diversion to be discontinued.

(b) The diversion is discontinued until the owner's right is satisfied or until the lessee establishes to the department that the discontinuance has had no effect on the owner's water right. Upon establishment that discontinuance has not had an effect, the department shall enter an order allowing the diversion to continue.

(6) If a person purposely, with malicious intent, causes the discontinuance of a short-term diversion through the complaint process provided in subsection (5)(a) and the complaint is found to be invalid and frivolous, the person is, upon conviction, guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be fined in an amount not to exceed \$500.

(7) This section does not limit the remedies available to an appropriator to enjoin or to seek damages from a person appropriating water under this section.

(8) A civil action instituted to enjoin or seek damages

from a person appropriating water pursuant to this section must be commenced against the lessee. The lessor is not a necessary party to a civil action. The lessee has the burden of establishing that the lessee's use does not have an adverse effect on a prior appropriator of water. The lessee is not required to prove a lack of adverse effect on any water right identified on a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402.

(9) (a) A local government entity, as defined in 7-6-602, is not subject to the requirements of subsections (3)(a) and (4) when conducting dust abatement that was not scheduled or contracted for 30 days or more prior to the use of the water.

(b) A local government entity that does not publish notice as provided in subsection (4) shall post a copy of the lease agreement at the point of diversion at least 24 hours prior to and during the time that water is diverted."

{ *Internal References to 85-2-410:*

x85-2-122      x85-2-402      x85-2-407      x85-2-419  
x85-2-419 }

**Section 12.** Section 85-2-427, MCA, is amended to read:

**"85-2-427. (Temporary) Temporary lease of appropriation right -- requirements -- rulemaking.** (1) Applications to temporarily lease an appropriation right that comply with the requirements of this section are not subject to the provisions of 85-2-402, 85-2-407, 85-2-408, or 85-2-436. After obtaining department approval pursuant to this section, an appropriator may temporarily lease an appropriation right.

(2) The amount of water leased may not exceed the total consumptive use of the appropriation right. For an irrigation right, the consumptive volume may not exceed 1 acre-foot per acre irrigated. The department shall determine the consumptive volume limits for other uses by rule.

(3) (a) Each appropriation right leased pursuant to this section:

(i) must have been used within 5 years prior to the application date;

(ii) may be leased only during the period of diversion for the appropriation right; and

(iii) may not be leased for more than 2 years one time during any consecutive 10-year period.

(b) The volume of water leased may not exceed 180 acre-feet per year.

(c) The point of diversion for the appropriation right may not be changed.

(4) The use of any appropriation rights on the place of use associated with a leased appropriation right is forbidden during the term of the lease.

(5) Storage may not be added to the leased appropriation right at the point of diversion or the original place of use.

(6) This section does not apply to changes in an appropriation right that would result in leased water being transported outside Montana. Proposed out-of-state uses are subject to the provisions of 85-2-402.

(7) Water leased pursuant to this section must be measured

at the point of diversion by a meter approved by the department. The appropriator shall report the amount of water measured at the end of the year in which the lease occurred or upon request of the department.

(8) An applicant proposing to lease an appropriation right pursuant to this section shall submit a correct and complete application on a form provided by the department and a fee as established by rule. The application must include:

- (a) the name and address of each lessee;
- (b) the name of all owners of each appropriation right;
- (c) the number of each appropriation right;
- (d) the proposed use and the place of use for the leased water;
- (e) the source of water to be appropriated;
- (f) the start and end dates of the proposed lease;
- (g) the proposed diversion flow rate and volume of water to be used during the lease;
- (h) evidence that the appropriation right has been used within the last 5 years;
- (i) a description of how the existing use of the appropriation rights would cease at the place of use during the lease period, including the number and location of acres to be removed from irrigation, if applicable; and
- (j) an analysis of potential adverse effects and a description of planned actions to mitigate potential adverse effects.

(9) The applicant is not required to prove a lack of adverse

effect on any water right identified in a written consent to approval filed pursuant to 85-2-402 in connection with a change application.

~~(9)~~(10) Within 30 days of receiving the application, the department shall approve or deny the application. An approved application must be correct and complete and meet the requirements of this section. The department may approve an application with conditions.

~~(10)~~(11) After approval, the department shall provide notice of the proposed lease that includes the information in subsections (8) (a) through (8) (g). The department shall:

(a) mail individual notice to potentially affected appropriators identified by the department in the area of the point of diversion; and

(b) post the notice on the department's website.

~~(11)~~(12) (a) For 60 days from the date that notice is mailed pursuant to subsection ~~(10)~~ (11), the department shall accept correct and complete objections to the proposed lease from any person whose property, water rights, or interests would be adversely affected by the proposed appropriation. The objection must be made on a form provided by the department.

(b) The department shall determine if an objection is valid. A valid objection contains facts indicating that the rights of other appropriators would be adversely affected by the lease of the appropriation right. If the department determines that an objection is valid, the approval for the use of the appropriation right under the lease is canceled and no water may

be used pursuant to the lease.

(c) The owner of an appropriation right whose approval is canceled under subsection ~~(11)(b)~~ (12)(b) may request a hearing on the objection pursuant to 2-4-604 within 15 days of notice of the cancellation. The department shall issue an order reinstating approval for the use of the appropriation right under the lease if the applicant proves by a preponderance of the evidence that the water rights of other appropriators will not be adversely affected by the lease.

~~(12)~~(13) Leased water may not be put to use until a final determination is made pursuant to subsection ~~(11)~~ (12). The lessee shall provide the department with a copy of the executed lease agreement before the leased water is put to use.

~~(13)~~(14) Violations of this section are subject to the provisions of 85-2-114 and 85-2-122. This subsection does not limit the remedies available to an appropriator to enjoin or seek damages from the owner of an appropriation right who leased the water or from a lessee.

~~(14)~~(15) The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. The rules must include definitions of consumptive uses and criteria for determining if an appropriation right has been used in the 5 years prior to the temporary lease application.

~~(15)~~(16) The department shall report annually to the water policy interim committee provided for in 5-5-231. The report must include the number of leases, the amount of water leased, and the number of irrigated acres taken out of production.

~~(16)~~(17) Pursuant to 85-20-1902, the provisions of this

section do not apply within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Indian reservation. (Terminates July 1, 2019--sec. 4, Ch. 236, L. 2013.)"

{*Internal References to 85-2-427: None.*}

- END -

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