

SECTION C PUBLIC COMMENT

Saturday 1/30/2021

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: McCone Conservation District

Name: Steve Wanderaas

Email: swbarsw@middrivers.com

Phone: (406) 650-7864

City, State: Vida, Mt

Written Statement: Mr. Chairman & Committee Members

McCone Conservation District cannot do the work we do to protect & promote the natural resources & citizens of McCone Co. & the state of Montana without the financial & technical support we receive from DNRC (especially the CARDD division).

Please support HB2.

Thank You

Steve Wanderaas

Chairman McCone Conservation District

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Valley County Conservation District

Name: Gene Granada

Email: vccdmt20@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 263-2325

City, State: Glasgow, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: VCCD HB2 Testimony.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A



54059 US Highway 2 W, Suite 2
Glasgow, MT 59230-2846
Phone: 406-228-4321 Ext. 101
Fax: 406-228-4359
vccdmt20@gmail.com

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee On Natural Resources and Transportation
The Honorable Representative Kenneth Holmquist, Chair
The Honorable Senator Duane Ankney, Vice-Chair

Support for H.B. No. 2: General Appropriations Act of 2021, Relating to the Funding of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division

Gene Granada, Chair
Board of Supervisors, Valley County Conservation District

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and Honorable Members of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee On Natural Resources and Transportation:

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the Valley County Conservation District, I would like to formally express our support for the Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARD) budget request. Our Conservation District has and will continue to utilize the various services offered through CARD. It is no secret local economies along the Hi-Line are more fragile than Montana's more populated areas. This is precisely why CARD's services are integral to our efforts to preserve and enhance conservation in Valley County.

Our communities have benefited greatly from the Outdoor Classroom Grant, where we work with several agencies to provide hands-on workshops for the 5th graders of Valley County. We also receive the Administration Grant annually, which continues to sustain operations and responsibilities within the District. Our conservation efforts are enriched, enhanced and made almost entirely possible thanks to the services offered through CARD. We urge you to consider how crucial this division and their programs are to effective conservation and community enhancement in rural Montana.

Additionally, our Conservation District would like to extend support for the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC), whose funding also resides within this appropriations bill. MRCDC has served a critical role in our community by actively advocating for our irrigators. Valley County irrigators would be affected by the proposed test flows at Fort Peck Dam by the U.S. Corps of Engineers; MRCDC, along with the four Conservation Districts downstream of the dam, have postponed the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement pending the completion of an extensive irrigation pump site survey and economic analysis. MRCDC's operations have a robust and positive effect on conservation within Valley County.

As it is so desperately needed, we respectfully request this Appropriations Bill as presented is approved. The Board of Supervisors of Valley County Conservation District sincerely appreciates your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Gene Granada, Chair
Valley County Conservation District Board of Supervisors

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Hill County Conservation District

Name: Ted Brown

Email: ted.brown@hubinternational.com

Phone: (406) 262-4243

City, State: Chinook, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: HILL CD HB2 TESTIMONY.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A



206 25th Avenue West Suite #1
Havre, Montana 59501
406-265-6792

LOCAL COMMON SENSE CONSERVATION

*The Honorable Representative Kenneth Holmlund, Chair
The Honorable Senator Duane Ankney, Vice Chair
Joint Appropriations Subcommittee On Natural Resources and Transportation*

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Board of Supervisors
Hill County Conservation District

Support for H.B. No. 2: General Appropriations Act of 2021, Relating to the Funding of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and the Honorable Members of this Committee:

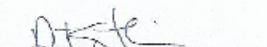
The Hill County Conservation District has benefited tremendously from the programs and staff of the Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARD). Because of the remote nature of our communities along the Hi Line, economic and educational resources can be sparse. The various programs offered by CARD make efforts within our Conservation District possible. The loss or reduction in these programs would severely impede our ability to serve Hill County. The Board of Supervisors of the Hill County Conservation District urge this committee to grant the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division, the budget request as presented.

Thank you for your time and consideration.


Respectfully,



Ted Brown, Chair


Tom Jurenska, Vice-Chair


David Satterline

Board of Supervisors, Hill County Conservation District


Cody Jurenska


Shawn Nyström


Kim Peterson

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Glacier County Conservation District

Name: Todd Eney

Email: glaciercountycd@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 873-5618

City, State: Cut Bank, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: GCCD H.B. No. 2 Testimony.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Glacier County Conservation District
CDs: Local Common Sense Conservation
41 Third Street NE, Cut Bank, MT 59427
(406) 871-5618 ext. 101
Conservation District email address: glaciercounty@glaccd.com

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee On Natural Resources and Transportation
The Honorable Representative Kenneth Holmlund, Chair
The Honorable Senator Duane Ankney, Vice-Chair

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Testimony of: The Board of Supervisors, Glacier County Conservation District

Support for H.B. No. 2: General Appropriations Act of 2021, Relating to the Funding of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee:

The Glacier County Conservation District would like to express our sincerest support for the budget presented before you at this hearing. The Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD) has given our Conservation District, and ultimately the residents of Glacier County, extraordinary support through several grant programs. In 2013, we received a 223 Grant that was used to build a community garden in Cut Bank, with the goal of connecting adults and children to the soil and their food. We receive annual mini-grants that are used to provide educational programs to the students in Glacier County. We have also received two Pollinator Grants and continue to receive Administration Grants each year used to support the numerous operations we administer.

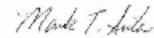
The programs offered through CARDD are absolutely integral to conservation efforts in Glacier County. Like many other counties and Conservation Districts in Montana, Glacier County has met financial difficulties and uncertainty. As a result, our community relies on CARDD's programs, staff and assistance. We urge you to consider the needs of our county and grant this budget as requested, so we can continue to provide common sense conservation to the residents of Glacier County.

We thank you for your time and consideration.

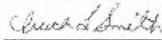
Respectfully,



Todd Eney, Chair



Mark Suta



Chuck Smith



Jerod Wahl



Chris Lewis

Glacier County Conservation District Board of Supervisors

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-01 09:00 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Montana Association of Conservation Districts

Name: Jim Simpson, President MACD

Email: jim.g.simpson@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 871-6011

City, State: Polson

Written Statement: Date: February 2, 2021 Testimony HB 2 Joint Subcommittee Natural Resources and Transportation Jim Simpson, Montana Association of Conservation District President (MACD)

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to give you some background and my thoughts about conservation district current and future funding needs

I would like to begin my testimony with a brief review of Montana's 58 conservation districts. Conservation districts are a subdivision of Montana state government dating back to 1939. Each district has between 5 and 7 elected and or appointed, unpaid supervisors. The supervisors meet at least once a month at which time they administer the Montana Stream Bed and Bank Act Preservation Law (aka 310 Law) and manage and implement conservation work in their districts. Conservation districts primary source of operating funds comes from a mill levy assessed against property in their district. The total amount of mill levy dollars derived from this assessment varies widely, with 42 of the 58 conservation districts receiving less than \$40,000 per year to hire and retain an administrator, conduct conservation work and pay their bills. Conservation districts implement conservation work in their districts that makes sense for their constituents. Conservation Districts are this state's natural resources wise use leaders

My testimony is divided into three distinct funding related needs.

First, we are concerned about funds available in the current fiscal year. We need funding to support conservation work in the next 6 months. CARD as well as conservation districts are facing a very significant shortfall in revenue as a result of declining coal tax revenues. This issue could be addressed in HB 3 and we are hoping for your support.

Second, I would like to speak to funding for CARD and conservation districts for the biennium beginning July 1, 2021. MACD supports the Governor's budget request for CARD and thus conservation districts. In addition, MACD requests that you consider an enhancement to this budget that will create a base budget for all Conservation districts of \$80,000 per year. The total estimated amount required to reach this base budget is \$2.7mm per year. I would like to draw your attention to the attached spread sheet which supports this request.

Third, I would like to speak to future funding for conservation districts. MACD requests that you consider the inclusion of an interim study in the appropriate legislation. The study would examine conservation districts and recommend the establishment of a conservation district trust fund, managed by the State of Montana. As part of the study, revenue streams to support the trust would be identified and the rules under which the trust would be managed and earnings distributed recommended.

Thank you for your time. I am available for any questions you may have.

Attachment: (a) Spread sheet showing 2020 projected mill levy income for CD's (b) List of Conservation projects being carried out state wide regionally and at the district level.

Files: 2021 vs 2023 base budget.pdf CD activity 2021.pdf Testify via Zoom: Yes Zoom Method: Computer

A sample: Conservation District and Association Projects 2021

Grade school education relating to conservation and agriculture

Soil Health seminars

Pollinator education, establishment of pollinator plots, outreach

Management of the "Streambed and bank Preservation "Act.

Rangeland Education

Irrigation water conservation and management

Mob Grazing education and outreach

Ground water quality studies

Stream restoration projects

Forest fuels mitigation projects

Tree planting projects

Scholarships for students pursuing a natural resource degree

Establishment and maintenance of community gardens.

Sage Grouse mitigation initiative

In partnership with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, staff and manage 4 AIS check stations.

No till drill and tree planter rental programs

Study and address urban storm water runoff

Flood mitigation planning

Well water testing cost share

No interest loans & cost share programs for producers implementing conservation practices

River-basin wide conservation on the Milk, Missouri, and Yellowstone Rivers

Saline Seep mitigation and reclamation

Envirothon

Shelter belts

Hosting Big Sky Watershed Corps people for a variety of conservation projects.

Conservation District	2020 Projected Levy Income		Current Ask	MACD GOAL
Flathead	\$ 384,247.07			
Missoula	\$ 270,248.02			
Gallatin	\$ 220,097.20			
Cascade	\$ 165,694.30			
Bitterroot	\$ 156,339.73	Conservation Districts with less than \$80,000 projected income, 2020	Base operating budget of \$36,000 Example Distribution	Base operating budget of \$80,000 Example Distribution
Lewis and Clark	\$ 133,192.72			
Madison	\$ 128,977.64			
Yellowstone	\$ 111,063.46			
Lake	\$ 78,657.87	\$ 78,657.87		\$ 1,342.13
Rosebud	\$ 77,030.76	\$ 77,030.76		\$ 2,969.24
Lincoln	\$ 71,859.29	\$ 71,859.29		\$ 8,140.71
Richland	\$ 57,601.72	\$ 57,601.72		\$ 22,398.28
Mill High	\$ 46,955.61	\$ 46,955.61		\$ 33,044.39
Carbon	\$ 46,933.34	\$ 46,933.34		\$ 33,066.66
Park	\$ 44,475.24	\$ 44,475.24		\$ 35,524.76
Hill	\$ 40,132.86	\$ 40,132.86		\$ 39,867.14
Glacier	\$ 37,832.95	\$ 37,832.95		\$ 42,167.05
Jefferson	\$ 36,416.92	\$ 36,416.92		\$ 43,583.08
Fergus	\$ 32,189.63	\$ 32,189.63	\$3,810	\$ 47,810.37
Chouteau	\$ 30,801.00	\$ 30,801.00	\$5,199	\$ 49,199.00
Stillwater	\$ 30,760.00	\$ 30,760.00	\$5,240	\$ 49,240.00
Beaverhead	\$ 29,303.78	\$ 29,303.78	\$6,696	\$ 50,696.22
Green Mountain	\$ 27,749.08	\$ 27,749.08	\$8,251	\$ 52,250.92
Dawson	\$ 25,843.76	\$ 25,843.76	\$10,156	\$ 54,156.24
Pondera	\$ 25,240.59	\$ 25,240.59	\$10,759	\$ 54,759.41
Big Horn	\$ 24,518.00	\$ 24,518.00	\$11,482	\$ 55,482.00
Valley	\$ 22,841.75	\$ 22,841.75	\$13,158	\$ 57,158.25
Toole	\$ 20,906.15	\$ 20,906.15	\$15,094	\$ 59,093.85
Blaine	\$ 20,583.95	\$ 20,583.95	\$15,416	\$ 59,416.05
Big Sandy	\$ 20,044.15	\$ 20,044.15	\$15,956	\$ 59,955.85
Liberty	\$ 19,999.67	\$ 19,999.67	\$16,000	\$ 60,000.33
Roosevelt	\$ 19,134.15	\$ 19,134.15	\$16,866	\$ 60,865.85
Sheridan	\$ 18,934.61	\$ 18,934.61	\$17,065	\$ 61,065.39
Teton	\$ 18,934.61	\$ 18,934.61	\$17,065	\$ 61,065.39
Prairie	\$ 18,400.07	\$ 18,400.07	\$17,600	\$ 61,599.93
Granite	\$ 18,178.51	\$ 18,178.51	\$17,821	\$ 61,821.49
Ruby Valley	\$ 17,572.00	\$ 17,572.00	\$18,428	\$ 62,428.00
Northern Powell	\$ 17,252.39	\$ 17,252.39	\$18,748	\$ 62,747.61
Custer	\$ 16,357.48	\$ 16,357.48	\$19,643	\$ 63,642.52
Lower Musselshell	\$ 15,706.00	\$ 15,706.00	\$20,294	\$ 64,294.00
Phillips	\$ 15,535.70	\$ 15,535.70	\$20,464	\$ 64,464.30
Upper Musselshell	\$ 15,261.52	\$ 15,261.52	\$20,738	\$ 64,738.48
Deer Lodge	\$ 14,677.38	\$ 14,677.38	\$21,323	\$ 65,322.62
Broadwater	\$ 14,306.54	\$ 14,306.54	\$21,693	\$ 65,693.46
Eastern Sanders	\$ 13,632.63	\$ 13,632.63	\$22,367	\$ 66,367.37
Daniels	\$ 13,126.90	\$ 13,126.90	\$22,873	\$ 66,873.10
Mineral	\$ 12,907.40	\$ 12,907.40	\$23,093	\$ 67,092.60
Sweet Grass	\$ 12,621.55	\$ 12,621.55	\$23,378	\$ 67,378.45
Little Beaver	\$ 12,412.24	\$ 12,412.24	\$23,588	\$ 67,587.76
Treasure	\$ 11,282.89	\$ 11,282.89	\$24,717	\$ 68,717.11
Judith Basin	\$ 10,443.25	\$ 10,443.25	\$25,557	\$ 69,556.75
McCone	\$ 10,283.20	\$ 10,283.20	\$25,717	\$ 69,716.80
Meagher	\$ 9,559.14	\$ 9,559.14	\$26,441	\$ 70,440.86
Carter	\$ 6,143.48	\$ 6,143.48	\$29,857	\$ 73,856.52
Powder River	\$ 5,404.99	\$ 5,404.99	\$30,595	\$ 74,595.01
Garfield	\$ 4,663.94	\$ 4,663.94	\$31,334	\$ 75,334.06
Wibaux	\$ 4,205.11	\$ 4,205.11	\$31,795	\$ 75,794.89
Petroleum	\$ 2,317.21	\$ 2,317.21	\$33,683	\$ 77,682.79
Total	\$ 2,787,795.10	\$ 1,217,934.96	\$ 795,961.60	\$ 2,862,065.04
		Approximate Amount Required to Bring 40 CD's to a base of \$36,000/year	Approximate Amount Required to Bring 51 CD's to a base of \$80,000/year	

Sunday 1/31/2021

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Neil Turnbull

Email: nturnbull2@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 787-7199

City, State: Brocton, Mt.

Written Statement: Rep. Holmlund,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and express my support for HB 2. In particular, I am writing to support funding for the conservation districts which provide a valuable service to us as ag producers. We operate a

farm/ranch and use the Missouri river water to raise crops for feed to winter our cattle herd as well as raise cash crops. We are facing a severe threat from fish wildlife and parks in the near future concerning the pallid sturgeon. The conservation district is providing us information and facilitating cooperation to work with the FWP agency and the US Army Corps of Engineers. The district was instrumental in challenging the EIS by pointing out numbers of producers using the water and also the high value of these crops which affects many communities and operations in Montana. We do not have an organized irrigation district so rely on the conservation district to help us fight the fight we need. I ask that you give strong consideration to continue funding the conservation districts. In my opinion if you could reduce the FWP budget and increase the conservation I would be appreciative.

Respectfully,

Neil Turnbull

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Ruby Valley Conservation District

Name: Audra Bell

Email: audra@rvcd.org

Phone: (208) 819-6313

City, State: Sheridan, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: HB223 Testimony.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A



P O Box 295, Sheridan, MT 59749 (406) 842-5741 X101 rvcd@midrivers.net WWW.RVCD.ORG

January 31, 2021

Dear Committee Members,

Through DNRC HB223 and district development funding, the Ruby Valley Conservation District and Ruby Watershed Council has accomplished a variety of watershed improvement projects. This funding source has been utilized to pay for staff coordination of upland restoration projects and riparian restoration projects as well as educational opportunities for community members. For years, we have optimized DNRC funding to improve the Ruby Valley and we hope to continue applying this funding source to "protect the land and preserve our heritage."

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Richard and Connie Iversen

Email: rjio@midrivers.com

Phone: (406) 489-7770

City, State: Culberston, Mt.

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: Rep Holmlund and members of the com-pdf.pdf Testify via Zoom: No Zoom Method: N/A

Rep Holmlund and members of the committee

Subject: HB 2 DNRC, Conservation and Resource Development Division, (Page 15, lines 24 &25)

We are Dick and Connie Iversen of Culbertson, Mt. Our family farms and ranches in Richland County on the Missouri River. We would like to express our support for HB 2 as it provides vital funding for DNRC at the state level, our local conservation district (CD) and the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC). The MRCDC and CD keeps us informed on important conservation issues facing us.

Our local Conservation District and MRCDC have been critical in guaranteeing irrigators downstream of Fort Peck Dam, like ourselves, have access to water during irrigation season. Since the U.S. Corps of Engineers proposes doing test flows out of Ft Peck Dam, the CD and MRCDC have kept us informed and ensured that our interests were considered during the ongoing NEPA process. With the help of MRCDC and our local conservation districts were able to convince the Corps to do an economic analysis and pump site survey to better understand how the proposal could impact irrigators. Had this not happened, the Draft EIS would have been released without consideration of these facts and likely jeopardized our ability to irrigate.

So, in conclusion please support in HB 2 funding for the DNRC, Conservation and Resource Development Division, (Page 15, lines 24 &25) to its full extent. We as ranchers in Eastern Montana need the DNRC, CDs and MRCDC help.

Thanks

Dick and Connie Iversen

13749 CR 332,

Culbertson, Mt. 59218

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Montana Wood Products Association

Name: Julia Altemus

Email: julia@montanaforests.com

Phone: (406) 241-7047

City, State: Missoula, MT

Written Statement: January 31, 2021

Representative Kenneth Holmlund

Chair, Natural Resources and Transportation Joint Subcommittees for Appropriations and Finance and Claims State Capitol, Room 317C Helena, MT 59601

RE: HB 2 Section C – Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Trust Lands Division Dear Chair Ken Holmlund and Committee:

On behalf of the Montana Wood Products Association, we offer our support for the request by the Trust Lands Management Division for an increase of 2.00 FTE, including personal services and operating budget.

Recently, the Division performed a mid-term Sustained Yield Calculation (SYC) due to an increase in timberland holdings and advanced modeling technologies. As a result, the new SYC increased to 60mmbf with an additional 8mmbf of opportunity wood in eastern Montana, which is a 5% increase in annual target for the current biennium.

The FTE will provide additional timber sale capacity for the Forest Management program.

Montana's timber industry relies on the sustainable supply of wood fiber from the state's Forest Management program. We encourage your support of the Division's request.

Best regards,

Julia Altemus

Julia Altemus

Executive Director

Montana Wood Products Association

Files: MWPA Testimony HB 2 Section C DNRC Trust Lands.pdf Testify via Zoom: Yes Zoom Method: Computer



January 31, 2021

Representative Kenneth Holmlund
Chair, Natural Resources and Transportation
Joint Subcommittees for Appropriations and Finance and Claims
State Capitol, Room 317C
Helena, MT 59601

RE: HB 2 Section C – Department of Natural Resources and Conservation – Trust Lands Division

Dear Chair Ken Holmlund and Committee:

On behalf of the Montana Wood Products Association, we offer our support for the request by the Trust Lands Management Division for an increase of 2.00 FTE, including personal services and operating budget.

Recently, the Division performed a mid-term Sustained Yield Calculation (SYC) due to an increase in timberland holdings and advanced modeling technologies. As a result, the new SYC increased to 60mmbf with an additional 8mmbf of opportunity wood in eastern Montana, which is a 5% increase in annual target for the current biennium. The FTE will provide additional timber sale capacity for the Forest Management program.

Montana's timber industry relies on the sustainable supply of wood fiber from the state's Forest Management program. We encourage your support of the Division's request.

Best regards,

Julia Altemus

Julia Altemus
Executive Director
Montana Wood Products Association

P.O. Box 1967, Missoula MT 59806 Phone (406) 241-7047 www.montanaforests.com

Monday 2/1/2021

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Blaine County Conservation District

Name: Greg Jergeson

Email: gjergeson@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 949-0495

City, State: Chinook

Written Statement: As the Chinook Urban Supervisor on and Treasurer for the Blaine County Conservation District, I wish to lend my name in support of the budget requested by DNRC, and especially for the Conservation districts Bureau. The Department has been very helpful for our work here in Blaine County.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Judith Basin Conservation District

Name: Teresa Wilhelms

Email: judithbasincd@macdnet.org

Phone: (406) 566-2311

City, State: Stanford Montana

Written Statement: The Judith Basin Conservation District supports the DNRC funding in house bill HB2. DNRC Conservation District Bureau (DNRC-CDB) has been a valuable asset to Conservation Districts across the state of Montana, providing technical assistance for project planning and stream permitting, financial assistance, and legal support. The DNRC-CDB has provided local Conservation Districts much needed support for conservation education, conservation practices and on the ground projects that benefit the landowners, producers, and residents of Montana. We ask that you support funding of the DNRC in HB-2, so that the DNRC-CDB can continue to assist the Conservation Districts in implementing conservation programs for Montana.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Custer County and Yellowstone River Conservation

Name: Keith Holmlund

Email: k.holmlund@co.custer.mt.us

Phone: (406) 874-3350

City, State: Miles City, MT.

Written Statement: Comments in support of Conservation Districts

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Pondera County Conservation District

Name: Jane Holzer

Email: holzerja@hotmail.com

Phone: (406) 799-6267

City, State: Conrad, MT

Written Statement: I am in support of full funding for DNRC/Conservation and Resource Development Division. The technical and financial assistance provided by CARDD supports the individual conservation districts' resource and education programs and their legal responsibilities. I am speaking in particular about the Pondera Co Conservation District (PCCD) but in general for all Montana CDs. In addition, PCCD oversees the very successful salinity program for 34 Eastern MT counties. The line item funding for salinity control provides continuity for technical staff and resources to address saline soil and water conditions for private property. I am recently retired from 41 years with the salinity program as the agronomist and Program Director so I can attest to the excellent reclamation success achieved to bring land back into production and protect water resources. I now serve as a Pondera Co. CD supervisor. I am available for questions.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Peter Fritsch

Email: tetonriver.mt@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 600-6353

City, State: Choteau, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Ruby Valley Conservation District

Name: John C Anderson

Email: jck@3rivers.net

Phone: (406) 842-5306

City, State: Alder

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Mike Ames

Email: mike@h2oagri.com

Phone: (701) 770-5108

City, State: Belgrade

Written Statement: Mike and Jan Ames, owners YDOC Land and Livestock at Frazer Mt. a 2500 acre irrigated farm and ranch in NE Montana along the Mighty Missouri River. The Missouri River is our life line to insure a feed base for our livestock operation and irrigated crop production for the farming operation. YDOC would not exist without the reliable water source from the Missouri River which is being threatened by the Army Corps of Engineers to change the discharges from Fort Peck dam to possibly benefit the Pallid Sturgeon. There are more logical alternatives to benefit the Pallid Sturgeon then adversely affecting every water user below Fort Peck Dam. The Missouri River Conservation District Council (MRCDC) and local conservation districts play a vital role working with Irrigators and water users along the Missouri River and there funding is vital to our area and the entire State of Montana. Please support HB 2 funding for the DNRC and the conservation and resource development division, page 15 line 24 and 25 to its fullest extend. Value added agriculture is very important to our survival and sustainability in eastern Montana. Thank You, Mike and Jan Ames, 100 Belle Creek Road , Belgrade Mt. 59714

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Big Hole Watershed Committee

Name: Pedro Marques

Email: pmarques@bhwc.org

Phone: (406) 552-2369

City, State: Divide

Written Statement: Honorable Chair and members of the Joint Committee, on behalf of the Big Hole Watershed Committee, I would like to submit my support for Section C of HB 2. This section funds the critical work of the DNRC's water resources division, which, since the formation of the Watershed Committee 25 years ago, has been a major ally in the management of Drought, understanding of the hydrology and water resources of the Big Hole, for the benefit of all users.

We support full funding of the DNRCs Water Resources division under HB-2.

The Big Hole Watershed Committee is multi-stakeholder consensus-based group with 23 governing board members representing all water interests in our watershed.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Jennifer Schoonen

Email: jennifer@blackfootchallenge.org

Phone: (406) 360-6445

City, State: Missoula, MT

Written Statement: Hello -- I work as a water resources program manager for a local nonprofit watershed group in the Blackfoot watershed. In my professional capacity, I work closely with many staff from the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Our work -- with communities, ranchers and farmers, and recreationists -- all benefits greatly from the technical and financial support we receive from the DNRC. DNRC grants have helped us implement irrigation efficiency projects, stream restoration work, and drought resiliency planning. We also rely heavily on the state's stream gage network and have worked closely with DNRC staff in the last couple of years to ensure the sustainability of the stream gaging system. Stream gages inform our drought response planning process and ensure communities are prepared for potential drought year water use restrictions. The DNRC Water Resources Division provides critical coordination and support to local watershed groups and communities across the state. Thank you for your consideration in supporting their budget for the next biennium.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Sun River Watershed Group

Name: Tracy Wendt

Email: sunriverwatershed@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 214-2868

City, State: Great Falls, MT

Written Statement: Dear Chairman Holmlund and Committee:

On behalf of the Sun River Watershed Group (SRWG), I am writing to encourage the Appropriations Subcommittee to approve the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Budget, HB2, Section C. SRWG especially values the partnership with and support we receive from the Water Resources Division. We have uploaded a letter of support including examples of the value DNRC provides. I regret that I am unavailable to appear in person or via Zoom due to scheduling conflicts. Thank you.

Files: 2021 Legislative Support HB2 Sect C SRWG.pdf Testify via Zoom: No Zoom Method: N/A



February 1, 2021

Honorable Chairman Kenneth Holmlund
Montana State Legislature, State Capitol
Helena, Montana

RE: HB2 Section C Natural Resources and Transportation

Dear Chairman Holmlund and Committee:

On behalf of the Sun River Watershed Group (SRWG), I am writing to encourage the Appropriations Subcommittee to approve the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Budget, HB2, Section C. SRWG especially values the partnership with and support we receive from the Water Resources Division.

SRWG is a 501c3 nonprofit organization headquartered in Great Falls. Our mission is to protect and restore the resources of the Sun River watershed and its communities. To support this mission, we implement projects that improve water quality and water management, control weeds, enhance habitat for fish and wildlife, restore hydrologic processes, and educate the public about our natural resources. We host events for volunteers and lead planning and on-the-ground projects. We also further our mission through work with local conservation districts, irrigation districts, government agencies, and other organizations.

SRWG is a small nonprofit, with one staff person and a board of directors. We could not accomplish the work we do to support local communities and natural resources without the good work of our partners like DNRC. Some of the important work SRWG relies on DNRC's Water Resources Division for includes:

- Support for seasonal stream gages
- Funding for the USGS stream gage at Muddy Creek
- Grant funding and administration, especially the Watershed Management Grant
- Participation in the state-wide stream gage working group
- Providing advice and support to SRWG's Water Management Working Group
- Administration of water rights across the Sun River watershed, for our residents and irrigation districts
- Facilitation of additional partnerships
- Education and training via the Montana Water Summit
- Advice and guidance for projects involving water management

I would like to provide two examples of the incredible value DNRC's Water Resources Division provides for SRWG:

In 2020, SRWG was unable to raise funding to keep a USGS stream gage operating on Muddy Creek. This gage has been in operation for over 80 years, one of the longest stream flow data sets in the state. The gage is important for flood forecasting, water management, and understanding the impacts of irrigation in this sub-watershed. The gage is also used by DNRC for administration of water rights. SRWG reached out to several partners to try and raise funding to keep the gage going. DNRC was able to help partially fund the gage and, because of their willingness to help fund it, another partner stepped up to fund the difference and keep the gage going. Without DNRC's financial support and Paul Azevedo's help reaching out to this other partner, the gage would not be operating today.

DNRC is also helping SRWG provide a valuable outreach tool for our community. SRWG had applied for funding to hire a consultant to build a River Conditions page for our website. This page will show real-time stream gage data,

PO Box 7312
Great Falls, MT 59406

(406) 214 2868
info@sunriverwatershed.org

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Richland County Conservation District

Name: Julie Goss

Email: julie.goss@mt.nacdn.net

Phone: (406) 433-2103

City, State: Sidney, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: hb2 letter.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Richland County Conservation District

2745 W Holly ST
Sidney, MT 59270
406-433-2103x3001

January 29, 2021

Representative Holmlund,

Re: HB2

On behalf of the Richland County Conservation District, I would like to express our support for HB2. The funding included in HB 2 provides vital support for the work we do at the local level. For example, Richland County Conservation District has been working on an Aquifer study in the West Crane Area. This aquifer is being developed at a rapid rate for irrigation. Richland County Conservation District with the funding from the Conservation District 223 grant program has purchased several data loggers that assist us in monitoring the water use in the aquifer. This information is vital to the modeling of the aquifer. This is just one of the many projects where 223 grant funds were used to assist the Richland County Conservation District.

Richland County has the unique distinction of being the only Conservation District who are members of both the Missouri River Conservation District Council (MRCDC) and the Yellowstone River Conservation District Council. (YRCDC) We have experienced firsthand the value of conservation districts working together to achieve a goal especially when dealing with a federal agency such as the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers. (USACE) MRCDC's involvement with the ongoing U.S. Corps of Engineers planned Fort Peck Dam Test Flow has been instrumental in ensuring irrigators interests are represented. With MRCDC's help, we were able to postpone release of the associated Draft Environmental Impact Statement until after the Corps had completed a thorough economic analysis and irrigation pump-site survey. MRCDC continues to keep our conservation districts informed by acting as our liaison with the USACE while we keep our county's irrigators on the Missouri up-to-speed. We continue to support funding the conservation district river councils.

Chair Holmlund and members of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Transportation, thank you for the opportunity to comment as well as your continued service to the State of Montana. We hope you will support HB2 and the continued funding for conservation districts it provides.

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Goss, Richland County Conservation District Administrator at richlandcd@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Dan Young

Dan Young, Chairman
Richland County Conservation District

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Lincoln Conservation District

Name: Rae Lynn Hays

Email: lincolncd@interbel.net

Phone: (406) 297-2233

City, State: Eureka, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: HB2 Testimony.pdf

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A



PO Box 2170
Eureka, MT 59917
Phone: 406-297-2233
Fax: 406-296-7188

www.lincolncd.org
lincolncd@interbel.net

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Transportation
Written Testimony House Bill 2
February 2, 2021

Mister Chairman Homlund, Vice Chair Aukuey, and Members of the Committee:

I am the District Administrator for the Lincoln Conservation District. Our Conservation District works diligently to protect and conserve natural resources in Lincoln County. Not only do we fulfill the state mandate to administer the 310 Law, but we also deliver educational programs to the public and facilitate conversations at the local level to foster better understanding of issues surrounding natural resources.

The Lincoln Conservation District is a proponent of House Bill 2. With a limited budget that stems from a county mill levy, we have utilized funding from the Montana DNRC to supplement our operating budget, deliver educational programs, and implement stream restoration projects.

Most recently, we relied on grant funding as well as technical expertise to complete a one-mile stream restoration project on the Tobacco River. With DNRC's assistance, we were able to enhance habitat conditions in an important reach of the Tobacco River that serves as a critical migratory corridor to spawning and rearing tributaries in the Upper Tobacco River drainage. Similarly, we were able to restore stream health on Mud Creek which was once an old mill site. These projects would not have been possible without the staff and funding from DNRC. We also rely heavily on this agency for technical assistance in administering the 310 Law.

The staff and financial contributions from DNRC are vitally important to our role of natural resource conservation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,


Roe Lynn Hays
District Administrator
Lincoln Conservation District

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-02 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Milk River Watershed Alliance

Name: Sarah Hitchcock

Email: sarah@milkrivermt.org

Phone: (406) 942-2266

City, State: Glasgow, MT

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: MRWA.pdf

Testify via Zoom: Yes

Zoom Method: Computer



MILK RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE
54059 US HIGHWAY 2 WEST - GLASGOW, MT 59230
(406) 230-0251 - CONTACT@MILKRIVERMT.ORG
WWW.MILKRIVERMT.ORG

Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Natural Resources and Transportation
The Honorable Representative Kenneth Holmlund, Chair
The Honorable Representative Senator Duane Ankney, Vice-Chair

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Written Testimony of:
Sarah Hitchcock, Coordinator
Milk River Watershed Alliance

Support for H.B. No. 2: General Appropriations Act of 2021, Relating to the Funding of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice-Chairman, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

As Coordinator for the Milk River Watershed Alliance (MRWA), I am tasked with promoting the preservation and rehabilitation of the Milk River Project. To accomplish this task, I work very closely with and represent the Conservation Districts that share the Milk River: Glacier, Hill, Blaine, Phillips, and Valley. Because of the rural nature of the communities along the Hi-Line, the Conservation Districts struggle to fund the most essential services they are required by law to provide.

Thankfully, the Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARD) has continually offered financial stability for each of these districts. Should CARD funding be reduced, in even the slightest of margins, rural Conservation Districts' ability to operate would be fundamentally challenged. Even with CARD grants and programs, many of these districts struggle. I would like to express MRWA's support for the budget proposal before you. Additionally, MRWA supports the proposal for an enhanced base budget for all conservation districts in the amount of \$80,000 annually. Montana is recognized worldwide for its commitment to conservation and natural resource preservation; imagine the potential of these districts if they have the funding to sustain their existing programs, and expand conservation efforts within their jurisdiction.

Not only does CARD support each and every Conservation District in the state, they also support countless conservation-focused organizations such as MRWA. In 2017, MRWA received a \$50,000 Technical Assistance Grant to fund administrative and operating expenses. In 2020, an additional grant in the amount of \$30,000 was awarded to continue the financial support of MRWA. With this funding, MRWA has been able to hire a full-time coordinator to build partnerships, collaborate with government agencies and NGOs, and educate the public on the issues that face the Milk River Watershed. CARD is crucial to the operations of MRWA.

On behalf of the Milk River Watershed Alliance, I would like to ask this Committee to approve the proposed funding for the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Conservation and Resource Development Division, and ask for the consideration of an enhanced budget during this legislative session.

Respectfully,

Sarah Hitchcock
Coordinator, Milk River Watershed Alliance

THE MILK RIVER WATERSHED ALLIANCE IS A LOCALLY LED ORGANIZATION WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES WITHIN THE MILK RIVER WATERSHED WHILE MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

Tuesday 2/2/2021

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: No

Organization: N/A

Name: Neil Iversen

Email: neiliversen@gmail.com

Phone: (406) 480-5841

City, State: Bainville, MT

Written Statement: My family farms and ranches in northeast Montana along the Missouri River. We irrigate and have a commercial cattle operation.

HB 2 provides funding for our local conservation district (CD) as well as the Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC). As irrigators downstream of Fort Peck Dam we live in fear of the USACE's ongoing test flow proposal. The CD's and MRCDC have kept us informed and ensured that we have a seat at the table for a decision that could change our livelihoods and our lives.

Thank you for your time and I urge your support of HB 2 and the continued funding for conservation districts it provides.

Files:

Testify via Zoom: No

Zoom Method: N/A

Details:

Bill: HB-2: General Appropriations Act 2021-02-03 08:30 AM - (H) JAS on Natural Resources and Transportation

Position: Proponent

Representing an Entity/Another Person: Yes

Organization: Montana Watershed Coordination Council

Name: Ethan Kunard

Email: ethan@mtwatersheds.org

Phone: (406) 475-1420

City, State: Helena

Written Statement: Not Provided

Files: HB-2 Letter to Committee_MWCC.pdf Testify via Zoom: No Zoom Method: N/A



February 2, 2021

Chairman Holmlund
Natural Resources & Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee
Room 317C, Montana State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

RE: HB-2, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Dear Chairman Holmlund:

I'm writing to you and members of the Committee on behalf of the Montana Watershed Coordination Council to express our full support of the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) budget as proposed in House Bill 2.

Our organization supports a network of nearly 100 community-based watershed and conservation organizations throughout the state who work on local land and water resource issues. These include watershed groups, conservation districts, local collaboratives, and tribal nations. As these local groups continue planning and implementing measures that maintain and enhance the conditions of Montana's natural resources, they depend on support offered through our state agency partners at the Montana DNRC.

The services, programs, and expertise offered through the DNRC provide crucial resources that support locally-driven conservation efforts in all corners of the state. The personnel, programs, and financial assistance offered through the agency support widely diverse land and water management needs, including: irrigation efficiency, forest health and wildfire hazard mitigation, invasive species management, drought and flood mitigation, local resource planning, and much more. Not only does this work ensure Montanans have access to a clean and healthful environment, but it also ensures our communities continue to thrive in our natural resource-based economy.

We encourage your support to invest in Montana's natural resources, and communities, by ensuring the Montana DNRC has the resources necessary to continue this important work in the next biennium and into the future.

Sincerely,

Ethan Kunard
Executive Director
PO Box 1416
Helena, MT 59624
ethan@mtwatersheds.org
(406) 475-1420