

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

2 INTRODUCED BY R. HOLDEN

3 BY REQUEST OF THE SENATE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND IRRIGATION STANDING

4 COMMITTEE

5

6 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
7 MONTANA URGING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE LOWER
8 YELLOWSTONE CONSERVATION DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE TO OBTAIN THE PROMISED
9 BENEFITS OF THE PICK-SLOAN MISSOURI RIVER PLAN AND RETAIN LOW-COST ENERGY FOR NEW AND
10 EXISTING IRRIGATION AND TO ASSIST THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT IN DRAFTING AND PASSING
11 FEDERAL LEGISLATION OUTLINING BENEFITS NEEDED TO SUSTAIN EXISTING IRRIGATION AND
12 DEVELOP NEW IRRIGATION IN MONTANA'S YELLOWSTONE AND MISSOURI RIVER BASINS.

13

14 WHEREAS, Montana lost 590,000 acres of land to reservoir flooding under the Pick-Sloan plan,
15 as set out in the federal Flood Control Act of 1944, and was in return promised 1,313,930 acres of new
16 irrigation, but only 76,200 acres were ever developed for irrigation under the plan; and

17 WHEREAS, over 16,500,000 acre-feet of water leave Montana annually in the Missouri and
18 Yellowstone Rivers--water that is abundant but underused in this time of need for growth in Montana; and

19 WHEREAS, Montana's conservation districts have reserved over 853,000 acre-feet of water for
20 new irrigation development, and the state has completed water rights compacts with several tribes that
21 enable tribes to develop many acres of new irrigation as well; and

22 WHEREAS, Montana's agricultural sector continues to shrink along with the population of rural
23 communities; and

24 WHEREAS, Montana consumes less than 30% of the hydropower that is generated in the state
25 under the Pick-Sloan plan; and

26 WHEREAS, Montana's Vision 2005 program identified the goal of doubling the value of irrigated
27 agriculture by the year 2005 by developing 500,000 acres of new irrigation, which is less than one-half
28 of the number of acres promised under the Pick-Sloan plan; and

29 WHEREAS, costs for power may double or triple, and without low-cost power, it will become
30 impossible to irrigate new lands and even existing irrigated lands identified in the original Pick-Sloan plan;



1 and

2 WHEREAS, agriculture is Montana's largest industry, and any increase in values from irrigation
3 would benefit the entire state and region.

4

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
6 STATE OF MONTANA:

7 That the federal government be strongly urged to:

8 (1) assist the efforts of the Lower Yellowstone Conservation District Development Committee in
9 obtaining the promised benefits of the Pick-Sloan Missouri River plan, as set out in the federal Flood
10 Control Act of 1944; and

11 (2) assist the efforts of the Lower Yellowstone Conservation District Development Committee in
12 drafting and passing the proposed federal Montana Water Resources Act, which will outline benefits
13 promised in the Flood Control Act that are needed to sustain existing irrigation and the development of
14 new irrigation throughout Montana's Yellowstone and Missouri River basins.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the
16 President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States
17 Department of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the presiding officers of the Energy and Natural
18 Resources Committees of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the Montana
19 Congressional Delegation, and the Commissioner of the federal Bureau of Reclamation.

20 - END -