



Montana Association of Conservation Districts
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President

Robert Fossum
Richland

February 7, 2005

Madam Chairperson & Members of the Appropriations Committee:

Vice President

Buzz Mattelin
Culbertson

My name is Sarah Carlson and I represent the Montana Association of Conservation Districts (MACD). We are testifying in opposition to HB 499 because of the reductions it will make to conservation district programs currently funded by the shared coal tax account.

Treasurer

Robert Anderson
Poplar

These include:

- Salinity Control,
- Rangeland Resource, and
- Envirothon Youth Education;

which are funded in **full** by coal tax dollars.

Directors

John Anderson
Alder

Todd Barkley
Baker

Bob Breipohl
Saco

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Trout Creek

Shirley Parrott
Round Up

Steve Vogt
Hamilton

Luther Waterland
Ekalaka

Mike Wendland
Rudyard

Jeff Wivholm
Medicine Lake

In addition:

- The 223 Grant Program,
- CD Administrative Assistance,
- Watershed Planning and Assistance,
- Engineering & Legal Technical Assistance, and
- 310 Administrative Assistance;

which are funded in **part** by coal tax dollars.

Many of your are familiar with the work of CDs in your area. Montana's 58 CDs are state-created political subdivisions whose boundaries usually follow the state's county lines and are governed by locally elected supervisors. The have a decades-long history of conserving our state's resources by helping local people match their needs with technical and financial resources, thereby getting good conversation practices on the ground to the benefit of all Montanans.

These eight programs funded by coal tax money are critical to the continued success of Montana CDs in utilizing their locally-led and largely voluntary approach to natural resources.

The passage of HB 499 will seriously reduce in not eliminate the CDs' share of the coal tax funding. We oppose this bill and urge the Committee to do so as well.

Thank you.