

# Montana State Legislature

**Exhibit Number:** 1

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**Motion for Fort Peck Advisory Committee meeting in Glasgow:**

**Whereas** the Montana Congressional delegation, Senators Max Baucus and Conrad Burns and Representative Denny Rehberg, should work together for a joint position on Fort Beck Lake; and,

**Whereas** their position should be to maintain the water level in the Lake at 2227 feet with an allowable increase of ten feet on occasion; and,

**Whereas** this would ensure stability in operation of the dam, provide for adequate power generation and adequate water for irrigation and it would provide enough water for full use of the Lake including boating, fishing and all other uses of the Lake; and,

**Whereas** Montana's Congressional delegation should work with the congressional delegations of North and South Dakota so that the Upper Missouri region speaks with a united voice in asking for adequate water in the reservoirs in the three states; and,

**Whereas** our sister states absolutely must come to recognize that Montanans, who traditionally care about and support people in other states who suffer natural disasters, are now experiencing a disaster, a slow, silent disaster, created by drought and the insidious and unnecessary drawdown of Fort Peck Lake; and,

**Whereas** the National Weather Bureau is forecasting another drought year with a warm and dry winter for Montana, it appears that this drought will continue unabated; and

**Whereas** this disaster is affecting all of the people, all of the communities around the lake, all domestic livestock production and all wildlife as well as seriously impairing electrical generation and irrigation—in other words, it affects all life in the vicinity of Fort Peck Lake; and,

**Whereas** studies have told us that the economic value of barge traffic is approximately \$7 million annually and the economic value of recreational uses of the upstream dams is approximately \$85 million annually; and,

**Whereas** it is the ultimate irony that the federal government is spending \$14.5 million on a fish hatchery near Fort Peck Dam while it is destroying the fishery in the Lake;

**Now, therefore be it resolved** that we, the members and friends of the Fort Peck Advisory Committee, urge Montana's Congressional delegation to join with the delegations from North and South Dakota to stop this disaster before it becomes virtually irreversible, akin to those areas of the country which have been struck by tornadoes and hurricanes; and,

**Be it further resolved** that we urgently encourage the implementation of this process the members of the three congressional delegations meet in an agreed upon central location to begin the process of saving the water in the reservoirs in the three states; for that purpose we offer the good offices of our association in helping to arrange such a meeting.

Misc/Fort Peck Advisory Group Resolution

Motion passed at Special Meeting October 13, 2004.

# OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

STATE OF MONTANA

JUDY MARTZ  
GOVERNOR



STATE CAPITOL  
PO Box 260861  
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0601

May 5, 2004

Brigadier General William T. Grisoli  
Commander and Division Engineer  
Army Corps of Engineers  
Northwestern Division  
P.O. Box 2870  
Portland, OR 97208

Dear General Grisoli:

I was shocked to learn of your recent plans to increase releases from Fort Peck Dam to 11,000 cfs during the month of May. This plan will severely impact an area already struggling with the affects of an increasingly intense five-year drought. Unfortunately, what looked like a very bad year for Fort Peck and Northeastern Montana now looks much worse.

As you are well aware, Fort Peck established a new historic low level two months ago and we are likely to see that record broken this runoff year. The Corps' Final Annual Operating Plan presentation characterized the drought in Montana as "extreme" and "exceptional." Indeed, Montana appears to be the most severely affected state in the region.

I understand that the March 2004 AOP called for accommodating the spawning requirements of one of the upper three reservoirs in the event of a low runoff year. That reservoir was to be Sakakawea in 2004 and Fort Peck was to receive the "third level" of emphasis after Oahe. I am very curious to learn how these levels of emphasis were determined. I am also wondering if it will be possible for Fort Peck to recover this lost storage before the end of the summer.

Contrary to the statement in the AOP, it is my understanding that spawning activity in Fort Peck occurs before June and is likely to be affected by declining reservoir levels in the latter part of May. We have also noticed that relative to the Corps' forecasts, typically inflows have been lower than expected and releases have been higher than planned.

Montanans have a strong record of cooperating with the Corps in managing this complex river system, and we understand that these are particularly challenging times for the Missouri. That being said, a careful balance can be achieved by being attentive to this important part of Montana. I look forward to hearing in detail how the Corps plans to strike this balance with these projected releases from Fort Peck over the coming months.

Sincerely,

  
JUDY MARTZ  
Governor

April 30, 2004

Tod Kasten  
RDO  
Montana Department of Commerce

Tod,

Here's what I've been able to gather from research we have on hand regarding Fort Peck Lake, Montana visitors, expenditures and activities. It is not as much as I thought I might find. More general to travel region than specific to Fort Peck.

Missouri River Country (Northeast Montana including Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Daniels, Sheridan, Richland, McCone, and Garfield Counties) hosts 3% of Montana's non-resident visitors or about 297,000 individuals for at least 1 overnight stay during their Montana vacation (2001 study). A 1999 study estimated that a total of 529,000 non-resident visitor traveled through Missouri River Country as part of their Montana visit.

These overnight visitors and those passing through spent \$33 million during their time in Missouri River Country (2001). Here's a list of where that money was spent:

Gas	\$11,623,000
Retail	\$ 5,853,000
Restaurant	\$ 5,289,000
Hotel	\$ 4,263,000
Grocery	\$ 2,679,000
Other	\$ 1,684,000
Auto Rental	
& Repair	\$ 67,000
Camping	\$ 583,000
Fees/Licenses	\$ 738,000
Outfitters/Guide	\$152,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$32,931,000</b>

In terms of activities engaged in while in Missouri River Country, here's the top ten list:

42% Shopping

- 27% Developed Camping
- 26% Wildlife Watching
- 23% Picnic
- 21% Visit Historic Site
- 20% Day Hiking
- 19% Visit Museums
- 17% Visit Lewis & Clark Sites
- 11% Visit Native American Sites
- 11% Fishing

The preceding information came from a Niche News report on Missouri River Country prepared by UM's Institute for Tourism & Recreation Research. It can be found on their website at this address:  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/nichenews/MissouriRiverTR.pdf>

For information that more directly relates to Fort Peck, here is information from another ITRR report entitled "Attraction Visitors in Missouri River Country Travel Region" May 2003. The address to access this report is:  
<http://www.itrr.umt.edu/Reg03/missouri.pdf>

In a survey of non-resident visitors in Missouri River Country, ITRR provided a list of regional attractions and asked the visitors to list those that they visited. The top ten listing was led by Fort Peck Lake & Dam, followed by:

- Field Station of Paleontology (Fort Peck townsite)
- Culbertson Museum & State VIC
- Fort Peck Powerhouse Museum
- Phillips County Museum
- Fort Peck Summer Theater
- Fort Peck Lewis & Clark Overlook Interpretive Site
- Fort Peck Museum
- Judith River Dinosaur Institute
- Fort Peck's Rock Creek Marina

So, 8 out of the top ten attractions are associated with Fort Peck Lake and Dam.

When asked what activities they engaged in, the visitors top ten included:

- Visiting Museums 41%