

# Montana State Legislature

**Exhibit Number:**

6

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724 Third Street West  
Hardin, Montana 59034

Phone: 406-665-3442 X101  
FAX: 406-665-1486

May 5, 2004

**Big Horn Conservation District  
724 Third Street  
Hardin, Montana 59034**

**Dear Big Horn CD Supervisors,**

I support your decision to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment in Big Horn County. If possible, it would be beneficial to see the study occur on the whole river system. Your letter indicates this is a first step, so perhaps a further study is your intention.

The knowledge gained from your study will benefit the landowners in the area as they will then understand both the quality and quantity of the current aquifers. This study will certainly assist decision makers in the future, as we begin to see additional growth and change in the county.

The current condition of the groundwater, in particular measuring the nitrate Concentrations will be very useful information.

Sincerely,

  
**JODI HASTINGS**  
District Conservationist



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ecological Services  
Billings Suboffice  
2900 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, Suite 301  
Billings, MT 59101-1228  
(406) 247-7366

May 4, 2004

Big Horn Conservation District  
Gloria A. Menke, District Administrator  
724 West 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Hardin, MT 59034-1604

Dear Ms. Menke:

Thank you for your request for a letter of recommendation in support of a proposal to develop groundwater baseline data for Big Horn County, Montana. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service encourages and supports this effort to fill a significant void of natural resource baseline information. Groundwater baseline data collection before significant coal bed methane production occurs would be prerequisite in determining groundwater changes during and after development.

If we can be of further assistance, please call (406) 247-7366.

Sincerely,

Lou R. Hanebury  
Senior Fish & Wildlife Biologist

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BIG HORN COUNTY  
P.O. BOX 908  
HARDIN, MT 59034**

Fax (406) 665-9706

(406) 665-9700

E-mail to: [cwells@co.bighorn.mt.us](mailto:cwells@co.bighorn.mt.us)

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May 4, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the Board of Commissioners, Big Horn County, are in support of the Big Horn Conservation District's effort to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment of the alluvial valley of the Big Horn River north of Hardin.

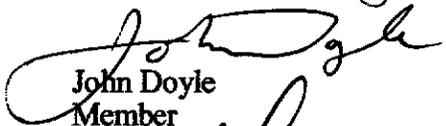
This area's groundwater system is critical and increasingly scarce resource due to drought, changes in irrigation practices and land use. The installation of test wells to monitor aquifer parameters and ground water levels would be beneficial data for future planning and development.

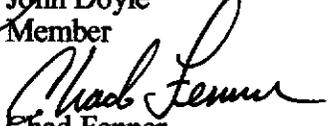
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Very truly yours,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
BIG HORN COUNTY, MONTANA

  
John Pretty On Top  
Chairman

  
John Doyle  
Member

  
Chad Fenner  
Member

DAVID & Wanda Reising

Rtel, Box 1117

Hardin, MT 59034

May 12, 2004

Big Horn conservation district

724 W 3rd St

Hardin, MT 59034

I'm in favor of The proposed groundwater study  
for North valley.

Sincerely

David Reising

CITY-COUNTY PLANNING BOARD  
BIG HORN COUNTY  
HARDIN, MONTANA

Box 305

59034

May 10, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

The board members of the Hardin-Big Horn County City-County Planning Board support the efforts of the Big Horn Conservation District to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment of the alluvial valley of the Bighorn River north of Hardin, Montana.

The groundwater system in the North Valley area is a critical resource which can easily be affected by drought, changes in irrigation practices, and changes in land use. The data obtained from this groundwater study will be an invaluable tool in future planning and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Zelka  
Chairman  
City-County Planning Board

May 12, 2004

Big Horn Conservation District

Hardin, MT

I am writing to support a groundwater aquifer assesment of the North Valley. I belæève an inventory of wells and springs would be in order as so many new demands have been placed on the aquifer in recent years.

We have experienced the drying up of springs on our property in recent years due to drought, logging, and other effects.

Also, with the coming of coalbed methane production, the impact of this new drain on thè water resource should be studied.



Charles Olenik

Rte. 1 Box 1071

Hardin, MT 59034

5-12-84

Big Horn Conservation District  
724 W. 3rd  
Hardin, Mt. 59034-1604

Roy B. Neal:

yes we do support a proposed groundwater study.  
And thank you for all the information in which we  
just received.

Cyril Pottyn  
RR 1 Box 1132  
Hardin, Mt. 59034.



## BIG HORN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

724 W. 3rd

Hardin, Montana 59034-1604

406-665-3442

FAX 406-665-3916

May 10, 2004

You are receiving this letter because you reside in North Valley or are a North Valley landowner. If funding can be obtained, the Big Horn Conservation District plans to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment of the alluvial valley of the Bighorn River north of Hardin. The proposal is a first step in developing groundwater baseline data throughout the county.

As development increases in the county, including coalbed methane production, it becomes obvious there is a definite lack of natural resource baseline data. There are wells and springs in North Valley that have not been tested for quality or quantity since they were drilled or developed, some over ninety years ago. In order to promote orderly development in the county and at the same time protect those natural resources, it is necessary to know current resources conditions.

The conservation district plans to apply for grant funding to develop county groundwater baseline data beginning in North Valley. In order to present a complete proposal, it will be necessary to present a history of groundwater concerns and also provide letters of support for such an undertaking. The project will include water quality and quantity testing for those residents who choose to participate. It may be necessary to drill additional water wells in some locations. They will remain functional wells when the assessment is complete.

Please review the enclosed proposal. If you think this is a timely and necessary project, please send a brief letter of support. The more letters of support the district can include with the proposal, the better chance there is of convincing the Montana Legislature that North Valley residents have concerns that need to be addressed.

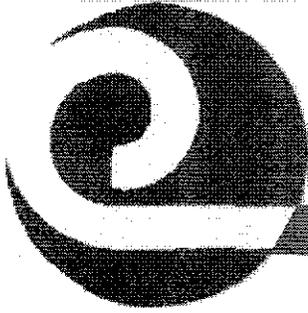
If you choose to include water quality/quantity concerns in your letter of support, you might consider addressing the following: Has there been a time when streams, springs or wells have dried up; are there concerns about pesticides or nitrates in the water; is there more or better well water available during the irrigation season?

The district is aware this is short notice, but if residents or landowners in North Valley will assist by providing letters of support and concern to the conservation district, it could help insure the proposal is funded.

Please reply to the Big Horn Conservation District at 724 West 3rd Street in Hardin, 59034 before May 24, 2004, preferably in writing, if you support a proposed groundwater study, or even if you do not. If there are questions, please contact the Big Horn Conservation District at 665-3442.

Sincerely,

Roy B. Neal  
Chairman  
Big Horn Conservation District



## BIG HORN CONSERVATION DISTRICT

724 W. 3rd

Hardin, Montana 59034-1604

406-665-3442

FAX 406-665-3916

April 28, 2004

Hardin City-County Planning Board  
PO Box 305  
Hardin, MT 59034-0305

The Big Horn Conservation District plans to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment of the alluvial valley of the Bighorn River north of Hardin. The proposal is a first step in developing groundwater baseline data throughout the county.

As coal bed methane production increases in the county, it becomes obvious there is a definite lack of natural resource baseline data. In order to promote orderly development of industry in the county and at the same time protect those natural resources, it is necessary to know the current resources conditions.

The conservation district plans to apply for grant funding to develop groundwater baseline data beginning in North Valley. In order to present a complete proposal, it is necessary to also include letters of recommendation for the project from interested individuals and organizations.

If you feel this is a proposal that will benefit the residents of the area and help provide accurate resources information required for future development, the conservation district requests that you consider writing a brief recommendation for the proposal. Realizing that this is short notice, it would be helpful if any letters of recommendation could be received by the district by May 6, 2004 at 724 West 3rd Street in Hardin, 59034.

Enclosed is a map and brief project proposal for your review. If you have questions, please contact the conservation district at 665-3442.

Sincerely,

Gloria A. Menke  
District Administrator

COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

P.O. BOX 908

HARDIN, MT 59034

FAX NO: (406)665-9706

(406)665-9700

E-mail: [cwells@co.bighorn.mt.us](mailto:cwells@co.bighorn.mt.us)

Jon Wells, President

John Doyle, Member

Rusty Rokita, Vice President

Becky Alvarado, Member

Lila Taylor, Member

Jim Del Duca, Member

Roy Neal, Member

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May 4, 2004

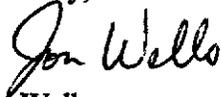
To Whom It May Concern:

The Big Horn County Planning Board is in full support of the Big Horn Conservation District's effort to initiate a groundwater aquifer assessment of the alluvial valley of the Big Horn River north of Hardin.

North Valley continues to experience rapid residential growth. The groundwater system in this area is critical and increasingly scarce resource due to drought, changes in irrigation practices and land use. The installation of test wells to monitor aquifer parameters and groundwater levels would be beneficial data for future planning and development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Wells  
President