

Testimony of Scott Bosse in Support of House Bill No. 251

January 21, 2005

9
BK-TEXT
DATE 1.21.05
HB 251

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. My name is Scott Bosse, and I'm a resident of Bozeman. Thank you for providing me this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 251.

I am here today in three capacities. First, I am employed as the Rivers Conservation Coordinator for the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. For those of you who don't know us, GYC is a Bozeman based non-profit conservation group of roughly 14,000 members dedicated to protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife of Yellowstone National Park and the lands that surround it. Many of our members either live along or recreate on the Gallatin River. We have a proud history of working to keep the Gallatin River one of Montana's greatest rivers. In 1998 when the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) granted the Big Sky Water and Sewer District a permit to discharge 15 million gallons of treated sewage per year into the Gallatin River, we challenged them in court. Because of that court challenge, the owner of the Big Sky Resort agreed to dispose of its wastewater by using it to irrigate its golf course instead of polluting the Gallatin River. We strongly support HB 251 because it would prevent sewage and other point source pollutants from being dumped into the Gallatin River until a detailed environmental impact statement on Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) designation is completed.

I also come before you as an avid fly fisherman who has spent hundreds of days fishing the Gallatin River from its source by Fawn Pass in Yellowstone National Park to its confluence with the Missouri River in Three Forks. I cherish the Gallatin River for its clean water, beautiful scenery, and, of course, for its healthy wild trout populations. To be frank, I'd like it to stay that way. So, too, would the dozens of fishing and rafting businesses that earn more than \$7.5 million operating on the Gallatin River each year.

Lastly, I come before you as the spouse of a Big Sky Resort employee and the holder of a Big Sky Resort season ski pass. While I believe that Big Sky truly is one of America's finest resorts and I feel lucky to live so close to it, I must confess that I am ashamed of the way the owner of Big Sky and the Yellowstone Mountain Club has gone about developing these properties with so little regard for environmental protection. This summer, the owner of the Yellowstone Club paid a \$1.8 million penalty for severely damaging two miles of streams and 10 acres of high altitude wetlands. It was the biggest penalty in history for this type of violation. Many of the same developers whose behavior resulted in that fine are today testifying against interim protection for the Gallatin River. To those people I say this - if you say you can develop Big Sky in an environmentally responsible manner without dumping pollution into the Gallatin River, then what are you so worried about? All HB 251 says is that you can't discharge point-source pollution into the Gallatin River if it causes permanent, substantial degradation of the water. It does not say you can't build houses, golf courses, or ski runs in an environmentally responsible manner.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I would like to conclude my testimony by urging you to support HB 251, to support keeping the Gallatin River clean and healthy, and to respect the will of the vast majority of Gallatin County residents and all Montanans who treasure this magnificent resource. Thank you.

Scott Bosse

Scott Bosse
722 Hunters Way
Bozeman, MT 59718
Ph: 586-0922

