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EXHIBIT 10
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HB 251

Jim Peterson, Chair
Natural Resources Committee
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, MT 59620

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

My name is Rick Meis, of Bozeman, and I am here today representing the thousands of members of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club in support of House Bill 251. In particular I am here on behalf of the members of the Headwaters Group based in the Gallatin Valley. Our members, like Montanans from across the state, know and love the Gallatin River.

I have personally been enjoying the Gallatin River for many years now. My friends and I occasionally take a swim in the river on hot summer days. I have canoed, kayaked and rafted extensively on the Gallatin. The flies and lures of those of us who fish and occasional boater are the only things that should get dumped directly into the Gallatin. I have a feeling that the anglers in the room today would not want those perfect casts called dumping. But seriously, this recreational use by many thousands of Montanans and our friends from out of state is not a permanent, substantial degradation of the river. And it is permanent, substantial degradation that I am here today to encourage us to avoid.

The Gallatin River is an incredible resource. It draws people from across the country for its world class fishing. I find it unconscionable to think that we in Montana would not want to do everything we can to protect and maintain such a heritage as the fishery the Gallatin provides, not to mention the value it provides to our economy.

This river boasts superb rafting and kayaking. I doubt you could travel the Gallatin Canyon in the spring, summer or fall and not see folks enjoying what the river has to offer. We tend to forget that this river also has stretches of quiet beauty and solitude in many spots where it is not directly in the sight of the highway. But it is not just the fishery and recreation that has depends on the quality of the Gallatin River. The river is also critical resource for agriculture in the valley.

You will be getting good, technical answers to the questions you may have about this issue from experts, so I will refrain from trying to make any of those points.

It makes sense to place a temporary moratorium on water permits that would permanently affect the water quality until the necessary environmental study is completed. This is a common sense approach that the legislature should utilize until this process is finalized. It would be a tragedy to endanger this now.

It is all of these things and more that bring me here today on behalf of the Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club to express our support of House Bill 251. I urge you to vote in favor of it.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rick Meis