

EXHIBIT 15
DATE 1.21.05
HB 251

Thank you Chairperson for allowing me to speak today. My name is Martha Johnson. I've been a full-time resident in Big Sky, MT since 1988. I'm married with 2 young boys and I've owned businesses in Big Sky for 14 years.

I urge you to not support House Bill 251 for these reasons:

As a business owner in the Big Sky Community I am concerned that this Bill would adversely impact the business community which has a trickle down effect to public services. I sit on the Ophir School Board – a decrease in property values because of this could have disastorous effects on an already strained educational funding source – I have one child presently in Ophir School and another to follow. I believe I would have to uproot my family and move to an area which would allow for my children to prosper educationally.

In the early 1990's the Big Sky Community came to you, the Legislature, to impose a Resort Tax upon ourselves to fix the leaking sewer system and implement a plan to fix, improve and eliminate the need to discharge effluent into the Gallatin River. In 1996-1997 a bond issue was approved for approximately \$6,000,000 which implemented a State mandated interim plan, which involved expanding to our existing sewer system an elaborate and state of the art filtration treatment plant and replaced the golf course irrigation system to maximize the spray irrigation that can be done on the golf course – again to stay away from stream discharge. In 2002, again, the Big Sky Community overwhelmingly approved by 80% of the voters a \$15,000,000 Bond issue that authorized construction of a State of the Art Sewer Treatment System Designed for Zero Discharge into the Gallatin River – that System is presently fully operational.

I have just described a responsible community – I am incredulous that this responsible community would be held hostage in an effort to leverage DEQ into fulfilling their obligation. I am further incensed that this Bill would create a de facto ORW without an EIS.

Thank you for entering my statement into the record.
Martha Johnson, Big Sky, Montana