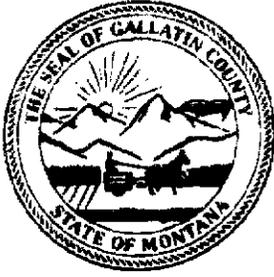


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GALLATIN COUNTY

311 West Main, Rm. 306 • Bozeman, MT 59715

County Commission

William A. Murdock
John Vincent
Joe P. Skinner

Phone (406) 582-3000
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ESSENTIAL 6
DATE 1.24.05
69

Representative Jim Peterson, Chair
House Committee on Natural Resources
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

January 24, 2005

Re: House Bill 69

Dear Mr. Peterson,

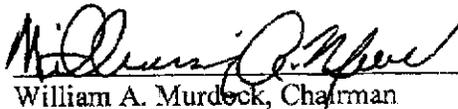
We have just learned that Section 5(2)(a)(ii) of House Bill 69 proposes to divert funds from the Montana Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program to fund water adjudication. We strongly disagree with the prospect of losing this important program, and propose that you instead consider funding water adjudication as offered under HB 22.

The Montana Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program is an important source of funding for communities across the State. The Legislature established the program to fund conservation, management, development and preservation of renewable resources in Montana. Funding is available through the program for public facility and other renewable resource projects. Canceling the program would be detrimental to the well being of the State's renewable resources.

Gallatin County applied for a grant this year to fund a critical floodplain study west of the City of Bozeman. If our project is funded, we intend to contribute County and FEMA dollars to raise the \$800,000 necessary for completion. The elimination of the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program may impede our chances of obtaining funding through FEMA.

As drafted, House Bill 69 is detrimental to Gallatin County and numerous other communities across the State who could benefit from this program. Please strike Section 5(2)(a)(ii) from House Bill 69. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,


William A. Murdock, Chairman

(unavailable for signature)
John Vincent, Member


Joe Skinner, Member