

EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2-11-05
HB HJ 18

My name is Ingrid Lovitt...

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. Our citizen legislature is one of the most valuable democratic tools in Montana.

HJ 18 brings up your most important issues: What Montana will look like in the future and taking a stand for the economic and social well being of future generations.

Today we know that, First, our understanding of the effects of motor vehicle use and its accompanying demands on the landscape violate the rights of other users and of habitats for wildlife. Second, our understanding of the effects of human beings on our valuable lands clearly shows that habitat fragmentation decreases the value of those lands. The Forest Service road closures are a key component in ensuring the future of Montana.

ATV use is increasing, 880,000 ATVs were sold nationwide last year. The average user is a 40-year-old man with a \$60,000 income.

Road building and notable road re-construction is continuing, including illegal road building by ATV users, who will and do go wherever they can get away with it.

There are many spaces where roads can go, and do go, and will go and those places are NOT the same places that have the kind of values as lands where road closure is called for.

The Forest Service has an obligation to manage for multiple use, and should instead improve their road closure practices to occur not just on paper but at the gate.

My generation understands that the value of Montana is the ability to live in a state that is wild. Our most prosperous Montana cities-with good jobs and educational opportunities are those closest to public lands. Closing roads *is* economic development.

The dominance of motorized road users and road building over our precious wildlands is *absolutely unacceptable* for my generation. Generations before mine have historically consumed and allowed the unchecked building of roads on public lands without the consideration of the understanding we have today.

As trustees of the public interest, I urge you to table this bill. Deny letting this bill move any closer to the future of our state and of future generations.

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