

EXHIBIT 6  
DATE 2.14.05  
HB 606

Testimony of Elizabeth Green  
House Bill 606  
February 14, 2005

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Natural Resources Committee,

I am Elizabeth Green, of Big Timber.

I am here because of the glaring problems within the Metal Mine Reclamation Act which allows supposed small miners to create large environmental damage. The Metal Mine Reclamation Act allows mines under five acres of surface disturbance to operate without a permit and subsequently without bonding and reclamation. This is of particular concern to me because I live in Sweet Grass County where we have what currently qualifies as a small mine.

I am here in support of HB 606 because I believe it addresses an important problem that could potentially cause water degradation and leave taxpayers on the line for reclamation in my community.

The Lodestar Gold mine, located east of Big Timber, contains two sites. The mine site is on the Gallatin National Forest and the mill site is on private land. Both are on Lower Deer Creek Road, 12 to 15 miles apart.

Part of the mill site is a tailings impoundment which is built to hold approximately 24,000 tons. Currently, the impoundment is not bonded with DEQ, and DEQ has no authority to require reclamation at this mill site.

The Constitution states in Article IX, Section 2: "All lands disturbed by the taking of natural resources shall be reclaimed. The legislature shall provide effective requirements and standards for the reclamation of lands disturbed."

The small miner exclusion in the metal mine reclamation act currently bars the state from requiring proper bonding and reclamation for supposedly small miners that could potentially cause large environmental problems.

HB 606 will protect taxpayers, water quality, and the private property of adjacent landowners by making sure that mines that can do damage are adequately bonded for and adequately reclaimed.

Please vote for House Bill 606.