

SJ 9 – St. Mary's Water Project

Although I did not grow up on a farm or ranch, I understand that ultimately, water is more important than platinum, gold oil or silver. We can't live without it, we depend upon it for what we grow, what we eat and what we drink. It is the life blood of our economy.

Protecting our water appears to be an important part of my new job as your Lt. Governor. In addition to my work as chairman of the drought advisory committee, I will co-chair the St. Mary's Canal working group. I look forward to working on both committees to find workable solutions for Montana's water users.

Last week, I had a meeting with John Tubbs and Paul Azevedo to learn about the St. Mary's Project. What a project! What a challenge! It provides the life blood for the economy of the high-line of Montana.

Tomorrow, my chief of staff Will Hamerquist, John Tubbs, Paul Azevedo and I will leave for the Blackfoot Nations tribal headquarters for a meeting with their Tribal Council. I will be

there to express our administrations commitment to this project and how important it is to the Schweitzer/Bohlinger's agenda.

Governor Schweitzer is a farmer/rancher and a water user. When the Governor Schweitzer asked me to co-chair the St. Mary's Canal Working Group, he told me that the very future of the highline, the place of his birth, depends upon our success.

Senator Tester, through SJ 9, is requesting that the Federal Government make a strong commitment of funds to this project.

On February 7th, I will be flying to Washington to speak with our members of congress and people in the Bureau of Reclamation asking them to consider Montana's \$10,000,000 commitment to

this project as seed money for their commitment for a

* 120,000,000

~~\$100,000,000~~ Federal Government match.

The success of this effort starts with the passage of SJ 9.

Thank you for your consideration.