

Testimony of Toni Lusk in support of HB 606
Senate Natural Resources Committee
3/16/05

NATURAL RESOURCES
DATE 3/16/05
BILL NO. HB 606

My name is Toni Lusk and I am from Sweet Grass County.

It's my understanding that there are 535 mines statewide operating under the small miner exclusion. Of these, probably only ~~just~~ a couple of ~~these~~ which are large enough to use impoundments that pose a threat to the environment and neighboring landowners that DEQ feels would be covered by this bill. If HB 606 passes, these few mines would be required to obtain ~~ing~~ permits for their impoundments, which means that they would have to bond for and reclaim their impoundments.

Although there are few mines that this would apply to, the price of gold is quickly rising. Small mine operations in our state will likely be expanding with these rising prices.

I urge you to act now to close the loop-hole that allows mines which become large enough to do damage to our lands to operate without restriction. Please require ~~of~~ bonds to assure our protection by voting for HB 606.

Thank you.

Toni Lusk