

SB 281  
EX # 2

SENATE PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE & SAFETY	
EXHIBIT NO.	<u>2</u>
DATE:	<u>2-11-05</u>
BILL NO.	<u>SB 281</u>

February 11, 2005

RE: Please support SB 281

Chairman Cromley and members of the Public Health, Welfare and Safety Committee,

My name is Jerry Iverson. I live on a ranch near Big Timber. Since 1988, I have been involved with the permitting and development of the East Boulder Mine. I was on the Councils' negotiation team that produced the Good Neighbor Agreement between Stillwater Mining Company and Northern Plains Resource Council and two of it's affiliates. Since the signing of the Agreement in May, 2000, I have been a member of the East Boulder Oversight Committee in charge of implementing this very successful Agreement.

The 1992 EIS for the East Boulder Mine revealed that one of the main concerns of the residents of Sweet Grass County was the danger posed by the mine related traffic between Big Timber and the mine site. Each day, an estimated 600 employees, plus all the heavy commercial traffic, would travel 26 miles each way on a narrow, winding, mountain road.

At that time, MEPA allowed an Agency to impose conditions on a permit to mitigate for public health and safety. The 1993 Record Of Decision for the East Boulder Mine required that SMC develop a program for bussing employees to the mine site. The bussing program implemented by SMC strictly limits the number of vehicles which are allowed to travel to the mine site. I have no doubt that this bussing program has saved lives and protected the safety of people that live along the road to the mine.

If the East Boulder Mine were to be permitted today, recent changes to MEPA would prevent the Agencies from requiring a bussing program. Only the laws of the highway would limit traffic. The Agencies which issue permits need the authority to impose conditions which will mitigate impacts on public health and safety. SB 281 restores the authority necessary to protect the public.

Please support SB 281.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Jerry Iverson  
1270 Lower Sweet Grass Road  
Big Timber, Mt. 59011