

Madame Chair, and distinguished members of the Senate State Administration Committee:

I am Nancy K. Peterson, a third generation farmer/rancher, producer from Hill County.

This corsage I wear today, represents my life. Why, because it stands for what I stand for. This beautiful corsage was given to me yesterday, by the farmers, ranchers, and agricultural organizations at the Winter Fair in Lewistown. This corsage represents my industry, our number one industry in the state of Montana.

All of the 49 years of my life, I have never strayed from the premise of believing in our industry with my heart and soul. Yesterday, today, and tomorrow, I represent agriculture, defined as family, way of life, values, hard work, honesty, accountability and responsibility.

I am a product of Montana.

I stand before you today because of a commitment made by my family and myself. The response of my two grown sons to the appointment was, Mom, you can't turn this down. Mom, we're so proud of you!!! The response of my two daughters in law (one to be soon) Go, Grandma, Go!!! Go, Girl, Go!!! My seven year old Grandson, Payton, my four year old granddaughter, Paig, and my four month old granddaughter, Laramie Jo, I make a commitment to you and all fifth, sixth, seventh, and so on generations of Montanans, that if you want to live on the farm and ranch, I'll do everything in my power to see that happens. My friend and ex-husband is extremely supportive. My two brothers are proud and excited for me. And last but not least, my 83 year dear little mother, who lives in the Eagles Manor in Havre, Mt, who used to live 1 ½ blocks from my home in Havre, who is now 200 miles away, whom I manage all of her business affairs, and manage her farm and ranch that my grandparents homesteaded in the early 1900's that I grew up on that my youngest son, Kyle and his wife and two of my grandchildren now live on, who took my face in her hands on the evening of November 4th, after a call from Governor-elect Brian Schweitzer, with tears rolling down her face, said you have to go, you have to go. I thank the people of Montana for literally the hundreds of phone calls, e-mails, cards and letters, supporting me and encouraging me to take on the call of leading our industry in Montana.

Let me tell you a few things that you can't read about me in my bio. I stood on the pickup seat and drove the pickup in the pasture while my dad fed the cows out of the back, I helped feed the cows, with bales that were heavier than me, I drug them, instead of packing them, I drove the grain truck in the harvest field when I was five. I learned to milk old "Rosie" when I was a fifth grader, and I made the commitment to milk her twice a day, every day of the week. Because of that, my dad gave me the money from the milk and the cream, I got to keep her calves, and I didn't even have to pay for the feed. I opened my first checking and savings account when I was a sixth grader. I saddled up old "Joe" and rode through the fields picking rye and wild oats that my dad despised. (When I could get away with it, I rode bareback much to my mothers chagrin). I donned the leather gloves and the backpack portable sprayer to address a noxious weed, Canadian thistle, that appeared on our farm in the 80's, that wasn't there before.

Qualifications for the position—do you have a copy of my biography?

My Goals and Vision for agriculture—our number one industry that brings forth to the State of Montana, over 2.3 billion dollars, to support, enhance, promote and protect our agricultural industry, our producers, and our consumers. To further the industry in facilitating adding value to our raw commodities, both cattle and crops, to promote alternative energy sources, that include involvement from the agricultural industry, ethanol, wind energy, and the biofuels. To promote this industry to it's rightful place in the sun under the Big Blue Sky.

Our department budget receives only 1.2 million (roughly) of General Fund monies, that's .0045% of the total executive budget. That's less than one-half of one-hundredths of 1 percent. We, the industry, pretty much pays for services that the 24 department programs administer. The rest is grants both from the Coal Tax Trust Funds, the Noxious Weed Trust Fund, and federal grants.

The Dept. of Ag in conjunction with the Dept. of Livestock issued a joint press release opposing the opening of the Canadian border. I stand strong. (I will do what is necessary to protect our industry, our producers, and our consumers as well as the confidence our consumers have in our safe and adequate food supply) The Dept. of Ag is stepping up our efforts in testing livestock feeds coming into this state, to protect all Montanans. We also

work extremely hard on ground water issues and monitoring ground water. We're committed to protecting our natural resources for our agricultural industry. Other issues of concern, COOL (County of Origin Labeling), brucellosis, blue tongue, anaplasmosis and how that affects our industry with ban of our feeder cattle moving north to Canada. (Working with Dept of Livestock-Marc Bridges).

I, as well as other Directors of Departments, have initiated the lead in working together. I have met with Tony Priete and Evan Barrett at least three times in regards to economic development for value added products and alternative energy sources. I have met with Mary Sexton, DNRC, at least three times in regards to noxious weeds, and the cooperation of the departments, which will include Dept of Transportation, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, DEQ, and Corrections. Tony and I will be working together to further promote and add to our "Made in Montana" program.

Agriculture and its issues are not partisan. They're not labeled democrat or republican. They're issues to address to what makes sense, what's right, and above all how does it affect the industry, our producers and our consumers.

I want to put the agricultural industry back on the front page with the recognition and respect that it deserves.

"Made in Montana" That's me Montana grown Thanks to my creator, my grandparents and my parents Montana processed—Thanks to every single person who has crossed my life's path in the last 49 years and every issue that I have been faced with. Montana packaged (thanks to the creator, and my positions that I have had the opportunity to hold for being an advocate for the agricultural industry. Montana sold-----Montana, I'm sold on you!!!!

What an awesome opportunity, what an awesome responsibility, what an awesome challenge. I pledge to work hard, to do my very best for every Montanan. I'm committed to putting both feet forward, and as we might picture, when you put both feet forward, you might have a tendency to fall backward a bit at times, but because of this corsage and what it stands for, this industry, our producers, and my great staff at the Dept of Agriculture, have all assured me that they'll give me that little nudge just when I need it to remain forward with both feet strong!!!!

Thank you.