EXHIBIT 17
DATE 3-23-07
HB 831

SANDERS COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

March 22, 2007

REF: LC 1383-HB 831 Surface Gr ndwater

Chairman Walter McNutt and Nat al Resource Committee Members
Montana House of Representatives

To Whom It May Concern:

I have served on the Clark Fork W ter Basin Task Force representing county government since it began. Sanders County is home o the Avista Power Dam at Noxon, the PPL Power Dam at Thompson Falls and Thompson Ri r Cogeneration Plant at Thompson Falls.

I would like to address the 35 ga n water permit exemption as being used on large and small subdivisions. The Sanders Coun Commission Board works on two to three subdivisions per week. Many of these development are in tough, rocky terrain. In order to save time and money, developers tend to take the fast ro of single homeowner water wells and septic systems for each lot instead of community wells. T y do this to avoid going through the long process of filing for and getting water right for a comm nity well. Some of these lot owners may never strike water. Others may, in time, end up being c ontaminated by the neighbors septic system.

Household water use in Missoula i approximately 377 gallons per day. A 35 G.P.M. well will produce 377 gallons in 10 – 8 minu es, or conceivably, could supply 135 households. Many wells will never produce 35 G.P.M., but y point is that our water law needs to be modified to avoid drilling so many 35 G.P.M. exempt ells. As a result of community water wells, the lot design and road systems would fit the terrain be er for road safety and fire fighter protection. There are many 5 to 10 lot developments that comm nity wells would improve by using one or two exempt wells.

Thank you for your hard, difficult w k on improving and updating Montana water law.

Sincerely,

J. Gail Parson, Commissioner
Board of Commissioners

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