

EXHIBIT 9  
DATE 3/17/09  
SB 437

House Fish and Game committee  
Hearing on SB 437

3/17/09

Dear House Fish and Game Committee members:

My name is Bob Butler. I am from southwest Montana and have worked in the farm and ranch management field for the past 28 years. As SB437 emerged from the Senate without much fanfare, I was very surprised to learn more about exactly what the bill contains. Reading through the bill there are many concerns. I will limit my concerns to the situation outlined below:

Between 1995 and 1998 I was involved in the licensing of eight ponds in the counties of Meagher, Gallatin, Jefferson, Beaverhead and Madison. All of these ponds are "602" or exempt water rights as referenced in the bill. Upon learning about SB437 I decided to contact the landowners and check on the status of their ponds. I was able to contact seven of the pond owners. Of those seven, only two had received renewal applications from Fish, Wildlife and parks. As written, the five landowners who have not received renewal notices will lose their private fish pond licenses without recourse. These five landowners were uniformly amazed that Fish, Wildlife and Parks could not successfully mail a relicensing application.

Each of the landowners contacted assured me that there was no way they would miss a renewal notice of this nature. These facts indicate the policy, procedure, and execution by Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding private fish pond licenses are not up to speed. Couple this with the effects of SB437 and the result will be a group of very angry landowners denied an opportunity to legally relicense their ponds.

Please table SB437. This bill strips private property owners of a previously granted license without recourse.

Thank you for your consideration,

  
Bob Butler  
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