

IN OPPOSITION TO HB 292  
Testimony of Gayle Joslin  
January 26, 2011

I oppose HB292 to change the Montana Constitution. There is no need to add the words "*and economically productive*" where they have been inserted in section 3, Article II. That section of the Constitution now covers the subject of providing for environmental awareness while also providing the "*rights of pursuing life's basic necessities.*" In addition, that same section concludes with the recognition that "*all persons recognize corresponding responsibilities.*" Thus we can all pursue our dreams – responsibly. As a grandmother, I believe that our responsibility applies to generations yet to come.

I do not understand the point of adding the words *economically productive* into a well written document. I would hope that if there is a problem with providing Montanans with a "*clean and healthful environment*" that we have that discussion with public vigor rather than tacking on three new words without clearly discussing the objective and effect of that change.

I spent a career working to protect wildlife and the environment they need to survive and prosper. A good deal of that time was devoted to the review of state and federal projects including timber sales, mining, oil and gas development. Without exception those assessments all included the economic impacts associated with proposed actions.

If this legislation is an effort to weaken our right to "*a clean and healthful environment*" when an "*economically productive*" opportunity shows up, there is certainly reason to object. Nowhere has the abuse of such preference been more dramatic than when dealing with Montana wildlife. When a North Dakota rancher made a thousand mile journey west from Medora to the head of the Milk River, just 80 years after Lewis and Clark passed through, his travels were documented by Theodore Roosevelt who said, "*To use the ranchers own words, 'I was never out of sight of a dead buffalo, and never in sight of a live one'*". (Hunting Trips of a Ranchman and Wilderness Hunter, 1885 by Theodore Roosevelt). Commercial hunting was *economically productive*, and it went beyond buffalo.

It is good that our current Montana Constitution articulates the *right to a clean and healthful environment* and reminds us of the *corresponding responsibilities*. It is what has guided us as the wildlife abundance of today was restored to the bone-yard we were left with when the 19<sup>th</sup> Century closed. When Roosevelt wrote his autobiography, he addressed his monumental effort to launch the conservation movement as follows:

*“The things accomplished ... were of immediate consequence to the economic well-being of our people. In addition, certain things were done of which the economic bearing was remote, but which bore directly upon our welfare, because they add to the beauty of living and therefore to the joy of life.”*

These words remind us that there is more to life than money, and they came from a Republican President. We choose to address *the beauty of living and the joy of life* by calling ourselves the Last Best Place. There is no need to alter Montana's Constitution.

Gayle Joslin, 2763 Grizzly Gulch, Helena, MT 59601 406.449.2795