

Exhibit No. 16Date 3-4-11Bill No. SB 343

Flathead Basin Commission

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March 4, 2011

Dear Chairman Lewis and Senate Finance and Claims Committee:

The Flathead Basin Commission has been involved in water quality issues in the Flathead since 1983. We now face a very important issue across the State of Montana for which we need your help.

Our water quality sampling program recently provided water samples that suggested the possibility of an aquatic invasive species (AIS), possibly zebra or quagga mussels. After more thorough analysis from several experts, it appears that the samples are not invasive mussel species. However, we are mindful that the risk of infection is very real. All important water bodies in Montana face the same risk of an AIS infection.

Invasive species such as Eurasian Water Milfoil or zebra mussels or quagga mussels can significantly degrade ecosystems and dramatically impact native flora and fauna. Furthermore, they lead to costly maintenance for industries that depend on water resources such as hydropower, irrigation, recreation and others. Since the late 1980s, the invasive mussels have made their way across much of the United States. Therefore, we must proactively implement an AIS prevention program.

To reduce the risk of infestations or introductions of these unwanted invasive species we are urging legislators to:

- provide sufficient funding to support a robust, scientifically based AIS program;
- adequately fund AIS containment/management efforts into and within the State, this would include mandatory border and internal boat inspection stations;
- provide more funds for education and outreach; and
- fund the development and implementation of operational (1) rapid response plans; (2) containment plans; (3) treatment plans; and monitoring plans to avoid redundancy.

On behalf of the membership of the FBC and all Montanans, thank you for joining this effort to prevent and contain aquatic invasive species.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caryn Miske". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Caryn Miske
Executive Director

**Flathead Basin Commission
Resolution
Aquatic Invasive Species**

Whereas: The waterways in the United States are quickly becoming populated with a variety of non native aquatic species;

And whereas: The cost of operating agriculture irrigation systems, electrical power generators, municipality drinking water systems and other surface water dependent usage is irreparably and significantly impacted when zebra and quagga mussels are introduced;

And whereas: An aquatic invasive species introduction into a waterway often threatens the existence of native aquatic species, and may have the potential of invoking an onerous and costly threatened or endangered species designation;

And whereas: The primary and most common method of spreading zebra and quagga mussels is through transportation of recreational and commercial watercraft.

Therefore be it resolved: that FBC petition the Montana Legislature to promulgate, pass and fund legislation that requires mandatory watercraft inspections for all watercraft that are traveling into Montana and all watercraft within Montana that are traveling from infected waterway to waterway.

Unanimously passed on February 9, 2011.