

EXHIBIT 1  
DATE Jan 23, 2013  
HB 11 + HB6

Town of Belt  
70 CASTNER STREET  
P.O. BOX 453  
Belt, Montana 59412

MAYOR: JOHN MASONOVICH  
1/18/2013

Representative Rob Cook, Chairman  
Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Long Range Planning  
Fax No. 406-444-4825

Dear Chairman Cook,

**The Town of Belt is in dire straits!**

Belt is an incorporated community of 633 people located 20 miles east of Great Falls in Cascade County. There are 273 households in the community. Belt started as a vigorous coal mining community and was once a "company town" owned and operated by Anaconda Copper Company. The adverse environmental legacy of that industrial era remains.

Belt's Median Household Income (MHI), per 2000 census data, is \$25,469. Under Montana DOC project funding guidelines, this income level is considered low and eligible for grant funding. We have both water and wastewater capital improvement needs that have not been addressed for many years due to a shortage of funds.

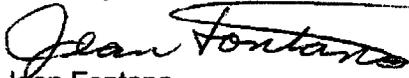
Our water storage tank is very old and leaks horribly. It is severely deteriorated and represents a potential health risk. In 2010 we received a Notice of Violation from DEQ demanding that we replace this tank. The town has no water meters. Maximum summer time water demand is over 650 gallons per capita per day, indicating substantial water loss, wasted water, and excessive system demand. TSEP and DNRC RRGL applications submitted to those agencies in 2010 included a Preliminary Engineering Report and a request to install water meters and replace the storage tank at a cost of \$1.1 million. The TSEP application was unsuccessful, and the DNRC application was successful for \$100,000 in RRGL funds. In 2012 we submitted a CDBG application to MDOC which was unsuccessful. We applied for WRDA and STAG Grants through congressional offices in 2010 without success. We sought funding through the DEQ Abandoned Mines Reclamation program, which helps communities impacted by coal mining, without success. We have run out of options for funding. We have "banked" \$100,000 with a DNRC grant, and that is all. We can possibly afford to borrow \$250,000 from SRF, but desperately need additional funds.

In addition, our wastewater treatment system is incapable of treating our wastewater to the degree necessary to comply with our discharge permit. As a result, the system is currently operating under administrative order from DEQ, whereby we are fined for each permit level exceedance. We received our first fine in the amount of \$700 this week. Our three lift stations are also in need of replacement or substantial upgrades. We submitted

applications to TSEP and DNRC RRGL in 2012, in hopes of partially funding treatment system and lift station improvements. Our RRGL application was ranked 13<sup>th</sup> and recommended for funding. Our TSEP application was ranked near the bottom of the list, and was not recommended for funding. We do intend to pursue other funding sources, but in the mean time we are spending our limited resources to pay fines.

In my written testimony to the Joint legislative Long Range Planning Subcommittee earlier this week, I suggested that the committee consider supporting both the TSEP and RRGL programs to the full extent of the current funding requests. Before writing the check to DEQ for payment of fines, I feel compelled repeat this suggestion, and beg the committee to help the Town of Belt in any way it can. The Town is in a rapid downhill spiral, and is truly desperate for help.

Sincerely;



Jean Fontana  
Clerk-Treasurer  
Town of Belt