

EXHIBIT 4  
DATE 3-23-13  
SB265

Attn: MT House Natural Resource Committee

Re: Senate Bill 265

I respectfully request your support for SB 265 to extend the water rights compact commission. I have concerns that the compact and associated documents are incomplete, have been changed, and have not been submitted to the public in a complete form with a sufficient public review period. It is unfair to put our legislature in a position to make a decision on the CSKT compact without all the information and without sufficient time to review.

Another concern I have is how the language in the Hellgate treaty which allowed the customary right to take fish, is being interpreted to mean the CSKT is entitled to off reservation water rights. This is very concerning because there seems to be no end to where the aboriginal rights will end... hunting, gathering, homesteading? I would like to see language in the compact by the CSKT waiving any future rights to customary and/or aboriginal hunting, fishing, gathering, homesteading, etc, in the Bitterroot Valley.

I do not think the state or federal government can afford the proposed payment to the tribes that I have heard. I have heard payments of approximately \$50 million from the state and anywhere from \$650 million to billions of dollars, for what and how are we going to afford this?

This is a difficult decision, but given the uncertain consequences of this compact, I would urge you to support extending the compact commission and allowing more time to work through the details.

Please support SB 265.

Respectfully,



Jeff Burrows  
Ravalli County Commissioner, District 4