



MONTANA STATE SENATE

SENATOR PAT CONNELL
SENATE DISTRICT 43

SENATE JUDICIARY

Exhibit No. 9
Date: 2/16/15
Bill No. SB262

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COMMITTEES:
BUSINESS & LABOR
NATURAL RESOURCES
ENERGY & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

SB 262 Testimony, 16 February 2015

Mr Chairman, Committee Members, I am Senator Pat Connell, and I represent SD43, the southern half of Ravalli County, and the headwaters of the Bitterroot River, and source of irrigation waters for the 37,000 acres that you have already heard testimony supporting the Compact.

I come before you today, having served on the Water Policy Interim Committee for the last 4 years, and as Co-Sponsor of SB261. WPIC has spent countless hours listening to both the proponents and opponents of this compact, from which testimony I concluded that the Compact was well negotiated, and a good resolution to a serious situation.



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As legislators who have successfully gone through the gauntlet of elections, there is a fundamental rule of debate that I recall and will remind you that is apropos to this issue: Personal threats and assaults are the hallmark of a lost argument, and Mr Chairman, reading of opponents' threats to individually litigate against legislators who support the Compact, and frankly, worse implied threats, indicate to me that the opponents have lost their argument.

In WPIC last November, during committee questioning, a member of my own County Delegation who opposed the passage of the Compact indicated that it wasn't important if



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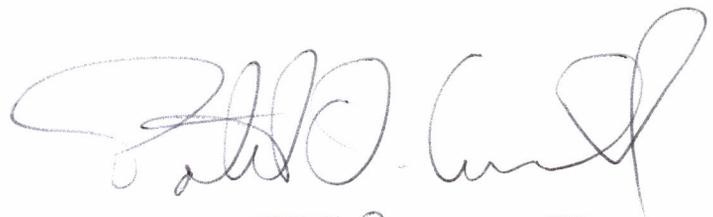
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water irrigators would need incredibly expensive defensive litigation if the tribes were driven to file *time immemorial* water claims in the Bitterroot and elsewhere. Mr Chairman, such stridency is in political-policy fantasyland, and fails to respect the water rights of ALL Montanans

I urge you to support the negotiated resolution for EVERYONE's water rights by supporting SB262


16 Feb 2015