

**WATER POLICY INTERIM
COMMITTEE
JANUARY 14, 2010
EXHIBIT 16**

Kolman, Joe

From: Hill, Walt [Walt.Hill@mso.umt.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, January 12, 2010 7:44 PM
To: Kolman, Joe
Subject: Water Policy Agenda - January 13, 2010

Dear Chairman McNutt and Members of the Committee –

My name is Walter Hill, President of the Seeley Lake Water District. I had planned to attend the hearing on January 13, 2010, but unfortunately I will be unable to attend. I am writing this to make a comment on the agenda item "Permitting in Closed Basins" scheduled to occur at 9:45AM on January 13, 2010 (tomorrow).

As you are aware, the Upper Clark Fork Basin is one of five(?) closed basins in the State. However, it is the only closed basin that does not allow an exception to allow municipalities to apply for a water permit. There is an exception for stock, but not for municipalities. The Seeley Lake Water District is presently permitted to draw 350 acre-feet per year from Seeley Lake. However, as this town grows, additional water will be needed. I request that the Upper Clark Fork Basin be allowed to grant exception permits to municipalities, as do the other closed basins. I recognize that such a permit would have low priority, but I know of no other recourse at this time that will allow us the flexibility we will need in the future. To date we have not been successful in finding other suitable water rights that might be for sale.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Walter Hill

Walter E. Hill
Division of Biological Sciences
32 Campus Drive
The University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812

Phone: 406.243.5140
FAX: 406.243.4304
e-mail: walter.hill@umontana.edu