

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

INTRODUCED BY LANGE, J. PETERSON, MACLAREN, MCGILLVRAY, STAHL

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA URGING MONTANA'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO INTRODUCE AND SUPPORT LEGISLATION REQUIRING THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TO INCREASE AND MAINTAIN A MINIMUM POOL ELEVATION IN FORT PECK RESERVOIR OF 2226 FEET ABOVE MEAN SEA LEVEL AND TO PROTECT MONTANA'S WATER RIGHTS.

WHEREAS, due to management of downstream barge traffic by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the water levels of Fort Peck Reservoir have reached historic lows; and

WHEREAS, the low water levels have had an adverse impact on recreational uses of Fort Peck Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, the declining water levels have had an adverse effect on fisheries management of Fort Peck Reservoir; and

WHEREAS, declining reservoir levels are affecting the availability of water for irrigation and other agricultural uses; and

WHEREAS, the ability of Montana water users to exercise their water rights is adversely affected; and

WHEREAS, reduced reservoir levels have exposed thousands of acres of land, resulting in an accelerated spread of noxious weeds; and

WHEREAS, the reduced water levels have caused a severe economic impact on all of central and eastern Montana in that marinas have closed, most boat ramps no longer reach the water and are unusable, and recreational boaters have limited use of the reservoir, thereby causing an economic disaster to the service industries of central and eastern Montana that provide food, lodging, fuel, sporting goods, boats, and marinas; and

WHEREAS, studies have concluded that the economic value of barge traffic is approximately \$7 million annually, and the economic value of recreational uses of upstream dams is estimated to be \$85 million annually; and

WHEREAS, the drawdown of the reservoirs on the Missouri River will have an impact on the cost of electricity to customers that receive power from the Western Area Power Administration; and

WHEREAS, restoring the lake level to 2226 feet above mean sea level will restore most of the

recreational uses and will still allow for future flood control.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That Montana's Congressional Delegation be strongly urged to introduce and support legislation requiring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to increase and maintain a minimum pool elevation in Fort Peck Reservoir of 2226 feet above mean sea level.

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