

## 1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7

2 INTRODUCED BY J. WELBORN, D. ANKNEY, K. WALSH, T. WELCH

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4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF  
5 MONTANA URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO REMOVE THE HIDDEN PASTURE  
6 WILDERNESS STUDY AREA FROM FURTHER WILDERNESS STUDY DESIGNATION.

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8 WHEREAS, in 1993, the Bureau of Land Management recommended that Congress exclude the  
9 Hidden Pasture Creek Wilderness Study Area located west of Dell, Montana, from the wilderness system; and

10 WHEREAS, more than 15,000 acres in this area is de facto wilderness as a result of inaction for  
11 several decades making it difficult, and in some cases impossible, for the residents of Southwest Montana to  
12 conduct business in this area; and

13 WHEREAS, the southern boundary of this wilderness study area is a county road that has historically  
14 been, and remains, the principal transportation route for those living and using the Big Sheep Basin for  
15 ranching and recreation as well as by the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, and  
16 the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; and

17 WHEREAS, power lines from the local electric cooperative crisscross over the road because the  
18 canyon is narrow, crooked, and very steep, putting portions of the line in the wilderness study area, subjecting  
19 the utility to restrictions that limit access for maintenance, repair, or improvement to this line; and

20 WHEREAS, the designation precludes Beaverhead County from addressing transportation safety  
21 issues, including widening the county road to prevent head-on and side-swipe accidents that have involved  
22 travelers unfamiliar with the road, area ranchers, and the Lima School bus, which travels this gravel road twice  
23 daily during the school year; and

24 WHEREAS, some projects require a specific angular-shaped rock that is accessible to larger dump  
25 trucks, and this material is located along the north side of the county road in the wilderness study area; and

26 WHEREAS, the center irrigation pivot owned by a local rancher crosses approximately 2.5 acres of  
27 land included in the wilderness study area. Also, the rancher owns 8 acres of land within the wilderness study  
28 area. The Bureau of Land Management will not trade land with the rancher, instead requiring him at great

1 expense to install barricades and an auto-reverse option on the sprinkler; and

2 WHEREAS, the east boundary of the area is within 5 miles of Dell, Interstate 15, Highway 91, and the  
3 Union Pacific Railroad track, and has historically, since the early 1900s, been used for logging and coal mining.  
4 There are numerous roads as well as the rock quarry used for decades by residents, local contractors,  
5 Beaverhead County, and the Union Pacific Railroad; and

6 WHEREAS, the wilderness study area designation prevents some forms of weed control and fire  
7 prevention measures that are available in other areas; and

8 WHEREAS, area residents, the local telephone and electrical utilities, and the commissioners of  
9 Beaverhead County have written letters and sent petitions to the Montana Congressional Delegation asking  
10 that the Hidden Pasture Creek Wilderness Study Area be released from further wilderness consideration, in  
11 accordance with Bureau of Land Management recommendations.

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

15 That the United States Congress be urged to remove the Hidden Pasture Creek Wilderness Study Area  
16 from further wilderness study designation.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the  
18 President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Majority Leader  
19 of the United States Senate, and each member of the Montana Congressional Delegation.

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