

Sandy Scherer, Paralegal
MT DEQ
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 596200901
Sent to: sscherer@mt.gov,

October 9, 2020

Re: Selenium Standard for Koocanusa and the Kootenai River

To Whom It May Concern:

My wife and I own **Kootenai Anglers** in Libby, MT. It's a business we started in 1982. Over the years we have seen a decline in water quality that is of concern to us. We write today in support of the Department's proposed selenium standards for Koocanusa and the Kootenai River. And we support DEQ finishing this process this year because Montana can't afford to put off establishing an enforceable standard.

DEQ has proposed separate standards for the reservoir and the River. We support 0.8 ug/l for the River and 3.1 ug/l for the Kootenai.

We plan to participate in the Legislature's **Water Policy Interim Committee meeting** on October 13. If we are able to make a comment at that time, we will reiterate our support for these standards. We hope the Internim Committee will see the value to Montana in not delaying this standard-setting process.

We can't expect BC to protect our water, because they haven't and they probably won't, given how they've degraded their own citizens' water in the Elk River. For the last several years I have seen the signs of Selenium poisoning on Rainbow trout in the Kootenai.

In addition, Teck plans massive increases in land disturbances, and at least three other coal companies are applying for permits to mine in the Elk Valley. The selenium problem will probably get worse. It will certainly get worse once the water treatment plants get shut off, and once all those mines stop producing income. In the meantime, it's critical for Montana to establish a legally enforceable standard.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Dave and Tammy Blackburn

Dave and Tammy Blackburn
Kootenai Angler
13546 MT Hwy 37
Libby, MT 59923