

Sandy Scherer, Paralegal  
Department of Environmental Quality  
1520 E. Sixth Avenue  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

October 9, 2020

----

Sent via email to: [sscherer@mt.gov](mailto:sscherer@mt.gov),

## **Selenium Standards for the Kootenai River below Libby Dam and Kooconusa**

Dear DEQ:

I strongly support DEQ's proposed selenium standards. I support the DEQ recommendation of 0.8 ug/L for Kooconusa and 3.1 ug/L for the Kootenai River.

As a city council member of Troy, Montana, I have taken a particular interest in the DEQ's standard-setting process for selenium in the Kootenai River and Kooconusa. Troy sits on the River and is of immense importance to our community as a source of pride and as an economic driver for our local economy. We need to ensure that the water quality of the River and Kooconusa remain in good shape and beneficial for Montanans and our many visitors.

Teck's mining operation in the Elk River Valley of BC is impacting our water and fish. The white sturgeon is both an endangered species and one of the most, if not the most, sensitive species to selenium. I understand that selenium is now found in elevated concentration in the Kootenai River below the Dam. I think it is imperative that DEQ and Montana establish updated standards for this pollutant as soon as possible.

BC must be held accountable for this pollution. We can't hold them accountable unless we have updated and scientifically validated standards. I am aware that the USGS and USEPA have employed the best selenium scientists in the country to derive these standards as part of the Selenium Technical Committee. In addition, I understand that DEQ must review this standard every three years to ensure that the standards remain appropriate to ensure the state is achieving the intended water quality results.

Lastly, I am also aware that the scientific effort that has resulted in the proposed standards began about five years ago, and that the DEQ proposed then to complete the standard-setting process by the end of 2020. Kudos to DEQ for reaching that milestone. I fully support completing these standard this year and not delaying.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Sincerely,

Shawna Kelsey

cc. Montana Water Policy Interim Committee via email to [jasonmohr@mt.gov](mailto:jasonmohr@mt.gov)