



We Care For The Country

**MONTANA
FARM BUREAU
FEDERATION**

502 S. 19th Ave, Suite 104
Bozeman, MT 59718

September 3, 2020

Water Policy Interim Committee
P.O. Box 201704
Helena, MT 59620-1704

RE: PD 0010 Adjudication Benchmarks Public Comment

To whom it may concern,

The Montana Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving and improving the agriculture and natural resource industries through member involvement in education, political activities, programs and services. We represent our membership on all facets of agriculture.

The Montana Farm Bureau Federation would like to take this opportunity to comment on the Water Policy Interim Committee's legislation on adjudication benchmarks – PD0010.

This proposed benchmark legislation is supported by the Montana Farm Bureau because it does not significantly hinder the adjudication process and still allows for the department to examine a fair amount of claims within a reasonable amount of time.

MFBF supports the changes to PD0010 and urges WPIC to support them as drafted.

Thank you for your time,

Rachel Cone

Montana Farm Bureau Federation

State Government Affairs



Senior Water Rights Coalition

PO Box 7325

Helena, MT 59604

(406) 439-2215

To: Water Policy Interim Committee

From: Krista Lee Evans, Senior Water Rights Coalition

RE: PD 0010 Benchmarks Bill Draft Public Comment

Date: September 2, 2020

The Senior Water Rights Coalition is a coalition of senior water right holders including irrigators, stock water users, and hydropower facilities. The Senior Water Rights Coalition works to protect the property rights of senior water right holders in Montana.

SrWRC appreciates the opportunity to provide public comment on the draft WPIC study addressing the proposed “benchmark” legislation – PD 0010.

The deadline for filing “exempt from filing” claims was June 20, 2019. A large number of claims were filed that need to be examined by DNRC and included in Water Court decrees. SrWRC believes that the new benchmark dates provided for in PC 0010 provide a balance between the timely completion of the adjudication and the accurate completion of the adjudication.

Extension of the benchmark dates allows DNRC to complete examination of the exempt from filing claims so that they can be included in preliminary decrees rather than having a supplemental decree. Litigation is costly and time consuming for senior water right holders. We recognize that in some instances supplemental decrees may be unavoidable and it is important to have them as an alternative. It is our preference that exempt from filing claims be included in preliminary decrees rather than a supplemental decree.

SrWRC urges WPIC to support PD 0010 as drafted as it provides a reasonable amount of time for DNRC to examine the exempt from filing claims while still maintaining a reasonable timeframe for completion of the adjudication.