



January 13, 2023

Montana Legislature Long Range Planning Committee

Dear Chairman Hopkins and members of the Long-Range Planning Committee,

I regret not being able to attend today's hearing on HB 11 in person, and I thank you for the opportunity to tell you about and urge your support for the Dodson Water Project, HB 6, and HB 11.

- The Town of Dodson has requested a \$125,000 Montana Renewable Resource grant and a \$500,000 Montana Coal Endowment Program to improve our water system.
- The project includes replacing well pumps as the Town has been operating on one well, replacement of aging and leaking AC water mains, installation of individual water meters and backflow prevention.
- The project is necessary to bring the system into compliance with DEQ Circular 1, to increase water main size and to install proper backflow prevention on service connections to reduce risk of contamination within the water supply system.
- The Town has had several costly major water main breaks within the past year which have left the residents without water for extended periods.
- The total project cost is approximately \$3.3 million, and we need the MCEP and RRGL grant funding to keep our user rates as low as possible.
- The Town of Dodson has a population of approximately 125 residents.
- The 2019 median household income (MHI) in Dodson is \$26,406. Over 45% of the population lives below the poverty level, with 70% of its population on Social Security and 45% on retirement income. With such a high level of restricted incomes our community cannot support large increases in user rates.
- Despite our financial challenges, our community is committed to providing residents with safe and reliable water and wastewater infrastructure.
- Early this year, we completed a wastewater system project which addressed overflows from our total retention lagoon.

Your support of HB 6 and HB 11 will help us hold the line on user rates to the project when our residents have such a high level of restricted incomes.

Thank you for your time, and please feel free to contact me at (406) 241-9688.

Respectfully,

Angel Arocha, Mayor

*Angel Arocha*