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From: Office Of The Governor

To: Governor's Constituent list

Sent: Friday, May 02, 2008 4:16 PM

Subject: Clean Water Act

On July 17, 2007 Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer testified before the US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on H.R. 2421, Representative James Oberstar's Clean Water Restoration Act of 2007. The intent of the act was to clarify Clean Water Act jurisdiction over waters of the United States.

To clear up misinformation about Governor Schweitzer's testimony on the bill as it was proposed, following are direct quotes from the governor's comments to the committee:

"We don't want to put the Federal Government in the position of managing our waterways all the way to the Rocky Mountains. We want you to be our partner, our collaborator. We want you to help us protect the water supply for the rest of the Country, but we don't want to put our farmers out of business, our loggers out of business, our cattlemen out of business."

"Again, the farmers and ranchers would like your help, but they wouldn't like to be in a position where the Federal Government says, oh, boy, you know that stock pond that you have got there on your ranch where you built it or your granddaddy built that thing 75 years ago? Well, you no longer water your cattle out of that because now we in Washington, D.C. think we own that water.

That is something that we don't want to see happen.

We also don't want the Federal Government to come in and say, the way you are irrigating, sir, has got to change today without the resources to change.

So if you want us to change in Montana, you bring us the dollars and we will do some of those changes."

"My caution is simply this: Make sure that the unintended consequences do not occur which are to shut down legitimate businesses in the natural resource industry that already have good filtration systems, that are maintaining a filtration system that already exists, that are just simply trying to continue an irrigation business in a place that has already been irrigating for the last hundred years, and there has been no significant damages to the land or any endangered species.

I think that in the implementation of the rules, we can get there. But I would just caution that in writing this legislation, make sure that you give adequate authority to local folks on the ground to interpret these rules. For example, the conservation districts that I mentioned earlier that are locally elected, that have the charge of protection the water in each of these conservation districts in nearly every agricultural county in America."