

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By Chairman Bob Bachini, on January 25th
1989, at 3:20 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: All with exception of:

Members Excused: Rep. Francis Koehnke

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Connie Erickson, Legislative Council and
Maureen Cleary, Committee Secretary

Announcements/Discussion: Chairman Bachini announced that
transportation would be available for those needing a
ride to Bozeman on Feb.4th for the tour of the
Agriculture Facilities.

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 203

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. SCHYE: This bill does not include or intend to cover
subdivisions or hobby farms. This bill is intended to
cover only agriculture water usage.

List of Testifying Proponents and What Group They Represent:

Ms. Marvel Cotton/ Glasgow Irrigation District, farmer (See
Exhibit #1)

List of Testifying Opponents and What Group They Represent:

Ms. Carol Moser/ MT. Stockgrowers Assoc, Helena (See Exhibit
#2)

Ms. Jo Brunner/ MT. Water Resources Assoc., Helena "I am
totally opposed to this bill in it's entirety."

Mr. Muncie J. Taylor/ Paisley Farms, Glasgow (See Exhibit
#3)

Rep. Swisgood/ Beaverhead County, "counted in opposition."

Mr. Phey Stokes/ Vice-President MWRA, "also opposed"

Mr. Dean Hall/ Billings Bench Water, MWDA, "totally opposed"

Ms. Mary Doubeck/ farmers wife, Helena Valley, "Is it fair for someone who pays more taxes to have the same number of votes as someone who has a small crop?"

Mr. Allen Nicholson/ Flathead Joint Board of Control, "I don't feel that it is fair to beat on the large land owners...."

Mr. Robert Ellis/ "This bill could make a problem for land owners."

Mr. John Overcast/ President, Paradise Irrigation District, Chinook (See Exhibit #4-7)

Mr. Ted Ereaux/ Malta Irrigation District, Malta (See Exhibit #8)

Mr. Mark Etchart/ Glasgow Irrigation District, Glasgow (See Exhibit #9)

Testimony:

All testimony is listed above, please refer to exhibit numbers.

Questions From Committee Members:

REP. DRISCOLL: How did the law change to give the large land owners more votes? MS. COTTON: The government had started this proposed 40 acres with one vote quite some time ago. The laws changed and I am not certain as to why some get more votes, but maybe it's because of the judges.

REP. ELLISON: Are you claiming mismanagement? MS. COTTON: Yes.

REP. DRISCOLL: How did the voter get the increased votes? MS. BRUNNER: The land could be leased and therefore increase the votes, there are various ways to do this. A lot of the laws are set at the Federal level and they must be abided by. MR. EREAUX: The law says that you can only irrigate 960 acres. It does not say how many acres you can own or vote with.

REP. BACHINI: Are you saying that a land owner can own 1200

acres and have the additional voting privileges. Yet only irrigate 960 acres? MR. EREAUX: Yes, this is correct.

MR. ELLIS: Any acreage over the 960 limit must be irrigated at the full cost of the water.

REP. ELLISON: Are voters allowed to vote by proxy? MR. ELLIS: Yes, that is possible.

REP. KASTEN: Could you provide some clarification on the amount of acreage allowed to be owned and voted within regard to family farming? MR. ELLIS: No matter who owned the land, be it husband, wife and son the total was still to be a maximum of 960 acres per family. REP. KASTEN: Who determines the rules for the governing body? Is it federal or state? MR. ELLIS: The state. Persons must reside within the district that they are members in the governing body of.

REP. BACHINI: Can the problem could be solved at a local level rather than through legislation? MR. ELLIS: I feel it could be addressed on a local level. But Federal laws could not be changed at the local level.

REP. GUTHRIE: Isn't the apportionment of the water and the apportionment of the voting rights based on the apportionment of the land? MR. ELLIS: Yes, that is correct.

REP. REAM: Who determined the 40 acre amount historically? REP. SCHYE: I am unsure of where those figures came from. I believe that it was about 1910 that the original figure was determined on a national level. Since then some of the figures have been changed in some states.

REP. ELLISON: Is the main problem water shortage or mismanagement? REP. SCHYE: Getting water to the farmer is always a problem. Whenever there is a dry year the potential for a problem of distribution is there.

REP. WESTLAKE: Does the dissatisfaction stem from the fact that the control of the board determines the appropriation of the water? On the basis of so many acres or is there priority involved? Who has the control of the board? MS. COTTON: Who ever gets the water first, gets it. If you farm on the east side, like I do you just don't get it. The system was built originally to handle 160 acre project. Now it has grown to 960 acres and it can't handle it. We are allowing too much land to be irrigated on an old

system. MS. BRUNNER: The state indicates how you regulate the water. Often people in the irrigation districts are like other people. They don't get out and vote. The large land owners exercise their right to vote. If the landowners got out and voted then perhaps they would not have such problems.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. SCHYE: There are some problems out there, and we can address them with this bill.

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE BILL 203

Motion: Rep. Compton: made the motion to "table"

Discussion: none

Amendments and Votes: none

Recommendation and Vote: THEREFORE THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO "TABLE" THIS BILL.

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 273

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. LINDA NELSON: District 19 (See Exhibit #10)

List of Testifying Proponents and What Group They Represent:

Mr. John Ortwein/ MT. Catholic Conference, Helena (See Exhibit #11)

Ms. Mary Lou Heiken/ Rural Ministries Coordinator, MT. Assoc. of Churches (See Exhibit #12)

Ms. JoAnn Forsness/ "WIFE" Women Involved in Farm Economics, Wolf Point (See Exhibit #13)

Mr. Brant Quick/ Northern Plains Resource Council, Helena (See Exhibit #14)

Ms. Mary Ann Fossen/ MT. Assistance and Counseling, Joplin (See Exhibit #15)

Mr. Dale Fossen/ MT. Farm Counseling Coalition, Joplin (See Exhibit #16)

Ms. Joan Forcella/ rancher, Whitehall (See Exhibit #17)

Mr. Bob Gilbert/ MT. Wool Growers Assoc., Helena (See Exhibit #18)

Mr. Cliff Murphy/ Billings, MT. Mental Health Assoc., "We are an organization which over the years has had a concern with those who are in distress. The reason is obvious why we support this bill."

Mr. Ted Newman/ Counsel of Co-Operatives, "The dollars that are spent for this program are well spent. 7 out of 10 ranchers that are served with this program are able to continue their business of ranching."

Mr. Bill Leary/ MT. Bankers Association " We support this bill"

Mr. Ralph Peck/ Dept. of Agriculture, Helena

Mr. Mike Murphy/ Dept. of Agriculture, Helena

List of Testifying Opponents and What Group They Represent:

none

Questions From Committee Members:

REP. STEPPLER: I do not agree with the fiscal note figures.

REP. NELSON: The Dept. of Agriculture is working with the budget to come up with more accurate figures. REP.

BACHINI: Those questions could be directed to an appropriations committee for clarification if necessary.

REP. ELLISON: How much of the money raised in fees is obtained from ranchers? MR. PECK: Due to the financial problems with the people that the program deals with, most are unable to provide fees. Therefore, most of the funding through grants.

REP. STEPPLER: Will the number of requests be enough to cover the needs in the coming year? MR. MURPHY: There may be need for greater coverage. But, we feel that we will be able to provide with the figures they must work with.

REP. KASTEN: Would you object to opening this program up to all rural communities? The drought has affected more than the farming communities. Those in small businesses are affected also. REP. NELSON: Small

businesses are covered under the current program.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. NELSON: Because agriculture is Montana's number one industry, we have a responsibility to protect and assist the people most affected.

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE BILL 273

Motion: Rep. Ream made the motion for a "do pass"

Discussion: none

Amendments and Votes: none

Recommendation and Vote: THE COMMITTEE THEREFORE RECOMMENDS
A "DO PASS" FOR THIS BILL.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 5:15 p.m.



REP. BOB BACHINI, Chairman

BB/mc

2101.min

8.50 am ✓
11/26/89
jd

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

January 26, 1989

Page 1 of 1

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation report that HOUSE BILL 273 (first reading copy -- white) do pass .

Signed: _____

Bob Bachini
Bob Bachini, Chairman

DAILY ROLL CALL
AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

50th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1989

Date January 25th

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Rep. Bob Bachini, Chairman	✓		
Rep. Francis Koehnke, Vice Ch.			
Rep. Gene DeMars	✓		
Rep. Jerry Driscoll	✓		
Rep. Jim Elliot	✓		
Rep. Linda Nelson	✓		
Rep. Bob Ream	✓		
Rep. Don Steppler	✓		
Rep. Vernon Westlake	✓		
Rep. Duane Compton	✓		
Rep. Orval Ellison	✓		
Rep. Bert Guthrie	✓		
Rep. Marian Hanson	✓		
Rep. Harriet Hayne	✓		
Rep. Betty Lou Kasten	✓		
Rep. Vernon Keller	✓		
Rep. John Patterson	✓		

Jan. 25, 1989

Re: HB 203 (voting limitation) sponsor: Rep. Ted Schye

(* Thank you for giving me this chance to speak to you. I'm Marvel Cotton of the Glasgow Irrigation District. (for the past 12 years I have been owner-operator of a grain farm I have owned and farmed since 1935. I work my own land and know every square inch of it. In the '40's I helped level it but floods have since changed that.)

* My farm was in the original Milk River Water Users Association until the present Federal Bureau of Reclamation took control. In my area the government built houses which were then bought. Occasionally the houses were rented from the government. This was after the depression of the 1930's and the building done around 1938. The Bureau of Reclamation furnished water and each farmer could own only 160 acres. Voting in the irrigation district was 1 vote for each 40 acres of land and to be sure no one controlled the district no one could have more than 4 votes. This gave each member an equal voice in district affairs. At this stage every member was treated fairly and no one monopolized the district. The government wanted every farmer to be able to make a living. Our present method of voting is eliminating farmers who are being pressured to sell and a study of old and new maps tell the sad truth that these little farmers were gobbled up by the big operators.

EXHIBIT 01
DATE 1/25/89
HB 203
(My responsibilities of running my farm began when my husband died in 1976 and I had to find a way to make a living. I tried to go into physical therapy training since I am a licensed practical nurse and felt I had something to contribute but no accredited school would accept anyone of my advanced age so I came back to my farm and studied which wheat did best and how much fertilizer to buy. I didn't know I also had to learn how the irrigation district handled the distribution of water. This came many problems and years later. Trying to get water and even be taken seriously when I ask for it caused me to be more observant and started me to investigate the way the Glasgow Irrigation District worked for my own economic welfare.)

(* This is a first for me to testify before a committee. You probably think that a 70 year old woman is an unlikely person to be knowledgeable about farming and irrigating fields but I can swape stories with

* anyone about wrestling an ornery power roll sprinkler irrigation line to get it straightened out. I've wallowed in gumbo mud until I lost my boots many times and ate as many millions of mosquitos as any other irrigator has but I also got beautiful crops of wheat and barley if I was able to get the water on it.

(In the year 1977 there was a water shortage and the district ordered each irrigator to only irrigate one time that season and I did. I have always followed the irrigation district rules whenever I could find out what they were. That year driving west I saw fields under water 2 or 3 times that season. Other years I was told that there was no water but checking I found fields west of me being irrigated. You do begin to check. I then realized that they meant that there just was no water for me. I pay taxes on 254 acres of land and the ASCS says 160 acres of it is cropland. In 1988 I paid Glasgow Irrigation District \$2244.46. Of that amount O & M (operation and maintenance) was \$1512.70 and construction was \$164.82. My water cost \$566.94. I use a power roll sprinkler system and also flood irrigate. I owe no one and my land is free of debt. My family all help work with me in the fields at times.)

* A hearing in Glasgow on April 6, 1987 addressed a petition to put another 366 acres under irrigation in our district. It was called an exchange. I went and protested saying that there wasn't sufficient water now. Turning to leave I was surprised to see the courtroom had filled with members in my district. We met and later consulted with the Glasgow Irrigation District lawyer and began to write our own petition asking the court to deny the petition that had just been heard. When I took our petition around thru the district to get signers I found the majority of the district members were as appalled as I was about the mismanagement in the running of the irrigation district. I heard more of the unfair division of water. Members griped about the mismanagement but still did not want to be quoted fearing repercussions. I did gain much helpful information which I have since used.

+ We organized a meeting with the Billings and Malta Bureau of Reclamation men and it took place on May 13, 1987 when we all met in the new district building at a regular board meeting. The board ask if we had come with a chip on our shoulder and I said no chips just problems. A new hearing date on the 366 acres addition to the district had just been scheduled so I turned in my petition to the board and reminded them that since they officially spoke for us they should be the ones to present it to the court. I had only been able to get 8 signatures but others had petitions too. Our petition ask that the original 366 acre addition be denied. I read a list of concerns we had put together after reaching all the members we could. Basically it ask that there be an improvement in the way water was handled and pointed out neglect of Bureau ditch property. We were so naive we thought if enough of us organized and worked as a group that the board would take us seriously. At that time it wasn't clear to us that we had no voice, no way of getting the changes we were asking for. The district is controlled and doesn't have to pay any attention of the majority of the members. When we obtained a list of qualified voters in our irrigation district we were shocked. There were 33 members who only had one vote while one member had 30 votes. This is completely away from the purpose of the original irrigation structure. We now understand that all our writing and phoning to get members to come vote in an election is wasted effort All the giant landowner has to do is show up and vote and the district runs his way and it's all legal. How would you like to belong to an organization that was costing you a lot of money but you were powerless to change even tho you felt you were not treated fairly? I want to be able to vote and have it count. To elect a commissioner to handle my interests because only the board votes on irrigation business. I can't vote if I object to how business is done and want to change it. Only the board can vote for the entire district.

(Traveling around thru the district I was told I was crazy to think I could change the way the district was run when old seasoned farmers had spent 50 years finding out that it was run by the big landowner. Most members had no idea of when or where elections were held or even when or where the board met. I have been told so many times that it is hopeless trying to fight when the power is so uneven. Since my years of getting nowhere but getting a good education in the evils of monopoly of power makes me understand the apathy and despondancy

(I found among the district members when I talked to them. I can't afford their luxury because it is costing me too much. The board decided that since so many members had not paid their bills to the district that they have doubled the cost of our water, thereby penalizing us because we pay our bills.)

*I tried to get other members to come and the only one who really wanted to come, couldn't. Ruth Putz would love to be here telling you how unfair the present method of voting is. She was 84 years old yesterday but that's not why she isn't here. Her health is so poor that we feared for her safety if she came. She can talk law better because she has helped make so many school laws. Her instructions to me were to remind you that the Supreme Court said one man one vote and by voting according to how much land she has you are making her a second class citizen.

When the power is in the hands of the large landowner it is misplaced because it isn't the large land owner that needs district irrigation water because he has his own reservoirs on his land while the small land owner must keep every acre productive.

(After the April 1987 hearing I began attending every monthly district board meeting and I took my cassette tape recorder and put it on my knee and recorded all the meetings from beginning to end. My tape recorder was very unpopular but revealing and these tapes have been made available to all the district ~~members~~ members in an effort to get their help fighting for fair treatment. It was not easy to attend the board meetings because I would come at the regular time of 8 p.m. that I was given only to be told that the meeting had taken place at 1 p.m. Also I have been ask to step out because of private business with the board. I have enclosed the tape of our May 1987 meeting with the Bureau to James Ziglar who is in the Water Division of the Dept. of Interior. I made up a brochure of the history of our attempts to be heard in the irrigation district and mailed it to Mr. Ziglar and he sent it on to Billings.)

* We were so frustrated by our inability to get a change in the district so we began writing endless letters to our congressmen and Sen. Melcher

*wrote back and told me the problem had to be solved thru the state legislature.

(You might wonder what results we got after we ask the board to make improvements in distributing the water. Nothing got better and indeed it got worse for those of us who had "complained" We got our water shut off as soon as we began to irrigate. I contracted for water and was told I could have it when my neighbor finished irrigating so I checked with him and when he was done I phoned and it was verified that I could go ahead and irrigate. I paid the 600 dollar turn on to the three phase line that runs my 60 horse pump and began cleaning my lines. Two days later I was told by the district that my water was turned off and the reason given was to clean the moss out of the ditch. This was the same ditch that is so filled with trash and debris I fight it when my sprinklers plug up so it was difficult for me to understand. I talked with the other district members who had also ask for reforms and all had had their water turned off soon after they begun to irrigate. It did not have the effect the board hoped because I only used it in more letters to Washington D.C.)

* If you have any questions feel free to ask. I will welcome your interest and will do my best to answer. The other side will be telling you why voting should stay the same and one of their arguments is that the large landowner supports the district more than the small landowner but remember when the district was started it was meant to treat every farmer equally regardless of his landholdings. We small farmers pay our share of the district and if everyone irrigated the equal amount the district was setup to carry there would be no water shortage. Since the large landowner keeps expanding he can only do it on the backs of the small landowner.

Thank you so much for hearing me out.

Marvel B. Cotton

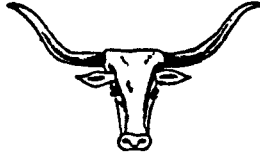
MARVEL B. COTTON
ROUTE 1-4032
GLASGOW, MT 59230
PHONE 406 387-5504

MONTANA STOCKGROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 1679 — 420 NO. CALIFORNIA ST. — PHONE (406) 442-3420 — HELENA, MONTANA 59624

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NANCY ESPY	BOYES	GREG RICE	HARRISON

January 25, 1989 EXHIBIT 2

DATE 1/25
HB 203

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Carol Mosher, representing the Montana Stockgrowers Association the Montana CattleWomen Association and the Montana Association of State Grazing Districts.

We are in opposition to H.B. 203 because we believe it would be a violation of private property rights. The United States Congress raised the 160 acreage limitation to 960 acres a few years back in recognition of the fact that if irrigated agriculture is to survive it must be allowed to adapt to economic change, more efficient and costly machinery, more efficient water delivery systems, and other changes which have occurred since the 1902 enactment of the U.S. Reclamation Program. HB 203 IS A STEP BACK INTO THE PAST AND MUST BE KILLED!

For example, the Glasgow Irrigation District, which has a Bureau of Reclamation Contract for water delivery to 18,011 acres, is the last of eight Irrigation Districts on the Milk River drainage and is suffering from chronic water shortages. This bill will only add to their problems.

The way it is now each 40 acres of irrigable land is entitled to one vote. There are 22 landowners with over 200 acres each. They irrigate 9,339 acres. These people provide 53% of the revenue to run the system. Their percentage of the vote is now 57%. If HB 203 were enacted they would only have 21% of the vote but still pay 57% of the revenue. Under HB 203 the landowners under 100 acres would have 42% of the vote and still only pay 13% of the revenue. This group only irrigates 2,337 acres.

In areas with a lot of subdivisions the commercial irrigators would also probably lose control of their districts and maybe their ability to repay existing construction contracts and generate needed operating revenue.

The 100 to 200 small landowners would be pulled down because the smaller landowner group which would control would probably not provide the aggressive leadership required to survive under present economic conditions. They, in most cases, derive only part of their income from their irrigated land by supplementing this with dryland farming, jobs in town, or livestock production.

In situations like these the large landowner must be fair thinking and dealing when they consider how their votes will affect all water users

since there is recourse in water law for dealing with questionable practices.

There was a case brought before Attorney General Greely dealing with this type of situation and he ruled that our present system of voting is fair and equitable. I have not been able to obtain a copy of this, as of now, but would be glad to provide it to you when I can get it.

I have comments from both the Malta Irrigation District and a water user from the Glasgow Irrigation District in opposition to this bill. I will read the one and include the other with the information to you since it is quite lengthy and repetitious of what I have said.

We strongly urge you to vote against HB 203. Thank you.

Carol Mosher

In opposition to HB 203

The United States Congress raised the 160 acreage limitation to 960 acres a few years back in recognition of the fact that if irrigated agriculture is to survive it must be allowed to adapt to economic change, more efficient and costly machinery, more efficient water delivery systems, and other changes which have occurred since the 1902 enactment of the U.S. Reclamation Program. HB 203 IS A STEP BACK INTO THE PAST AND SHOULD BE KILLED!

The Glasgow Irrigation District, which has a Bureau of Reclamation Contract for water delivery to 18011 acres, is the last of 8 Irrigation Districts on the Milk River drainage and is suffering from chronic water shortages. This bill will only add to our problems.

STATISTICS

Over 200 acres has 22 landowners - 9339 acres - now vote 253 - under HB 203 would vote 110. This is 21% of votes.

100 to 200 acres has 37 landowners - 6084 acres - now vote 124 - under HB 203 would vote 124. This is 35% of votes.

0 to 100 acres has 44 landowners - 2337 acres - now vote 82 - under HB 203 would vote 82. This is 42% of votes.

LAND REVENUE FOR DISTRICT OPERATIONS COMPARED TO VOTING POWER

Over 220 acres landowners provide 53% of Revenue - % of vote now 57% - under HB 203 would have 21% of votes.

100 to 200 acres landowners provide 34% of Revenue - % of vote now 25% - under HB 203 would have 35% of votes.

0 to 100 acres landowners provide 13% of Revenue - % of vote now 18% - under HB 203 would have 42% of votes.

Note that under HB 203 landowners under 100 acres would have 42% of the votes while only contributing 13% of the revenue needed to operate the District.

Under HB 203 landowners from 100 to 200 acres who contribute 34 % of the revenue would gain voting power by rising from 25% of the vote to 35% of the vote.

The landowners under 100 acres would be the big gainers as they would go from having 18% of the vote and contributing only 13% of the Revenue to having 42% of the vote (double the 21% of the over 200 acres landowners who contribute 53% of the revenue).

This could lead to loss of control by the landowners with 9339 acres to the landowners with only 2337 acres.

In areas with a lot of subdivisions the commercial irrigators would also probably lose control of their districts and maybe their ability to repay existing construction contracts and generate needed operating revenue.

The 100 to 200 acre landowners would be pulled down because the smaller landowner group which would control would probably not provide the aggressive leadership required to survive under present economic conditions. They in most cases derive only part of their income from their irrigated land by supplementing this with dryland farming, jobs in town, or livestock production.

EXHIBIT 03
DATE 1/25
HB 203

TESTIMONY OF:

MUNCIE J. TAYLOR *Muncie J. Taylor*
PAISLEY FARMS
P.O. BOX 64
GLASGOW, MT 59230

TO THE:

HOUSE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL #203
JANUARY 25, 1989
HELENA, MONTANA

Chairman, Representative Bob Bachini

I am a farmer west of Glasgow and have about 800 acres under the Glasgow Irrigation District. The bill being proposed would undermine the rights that I currently have to determine to some degree what is done with the water in this district.

When I purchased this property, it was made clear that I would have a voice in the election to the extent that I owned property. I felt this to be fair as the ones having more to lose were the larger owners, therefore they should have the most to say about what goes on. I realized that the small farmer needed a voice also and the allowance of one vote per 40 acres or fraction thereof was how they could have their voice. Their voice would be to the degree to which they they had invested in the land and therefore the taxes supporting the water district.

This bill would destroy the equitability that exists in the relation between the number of shares (acres) owned to what they have to say about what is done with the water. For instance if a group came in and purchased land in the district, subdivided it into small parcels, sold it and the new owners had no interest in farming, these people could out vote the farmers and decide to sell their water for some other use - say a company wanting water for a slurry pipeline.

The state projects currently use a system where the water users form a corporation to run the projects. These corporations are set up giving one vote for every acre foot of water contracted for by the farmer. This is similiar to the way the state statutes that are now on the books read. If HB 203 passes it would create a disparity between these two types of systems.

This cannot be allowed to happen. I ask your vote to kill this bill before it goes any further.

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 1/25
HB 203

To whom it may concern;

The Fort Belknap Immigration Detention
located at Lemmon, mt. Is against
House bill 203.

Kay M Blatter
President

EXHIBIT 5
DATE 1/25
HB 203

Honorable Committee Members.

This is to notify you that the Alameda
Irrigation district is opposed to House bill 203.
We feel our present form of electing directors
should be continued in its present form. We are
not in favor of this legislation regardless of indications
otherwise in material submitted to you by others.

Had our district, along with others, been prop-
erly consulted in this matter it is a strong likley-hood
that you would not be spending your time considering
legislation that is not needed.

Thanks for your consideration
Carroll Rudolph - Chairman
May Maddy - Director
Jack Grist - Director

EXHIBIT 6
DATE 1/25
HB 203

Gentlemen:

Jan 24, 1989

On behalf of the Zurich Irrigation District we are not in favor of H. B. #203. I have visited with several bonifide farmers and Ranchers within the Zurich District. They said to leave the voting as is. This bill would cause nothing but trouble for the water users paying the taxes.

We would appreciate anything you can do to get this bill defeated!

thanks.

Zurich Irrigation District

Frederick W. Miller
President

EXHIBIT 07
DATE 1/25
HB 203

Gentlemen.

The Harlem Irrigation
district is very much against
(H.B. # 203).

We feel it should be
left as is as the only fair
way for the taxpayers to
be represented as to how their
money is being used.
Sincerely
Rudolph P. Pres.
Harlem Irr. District

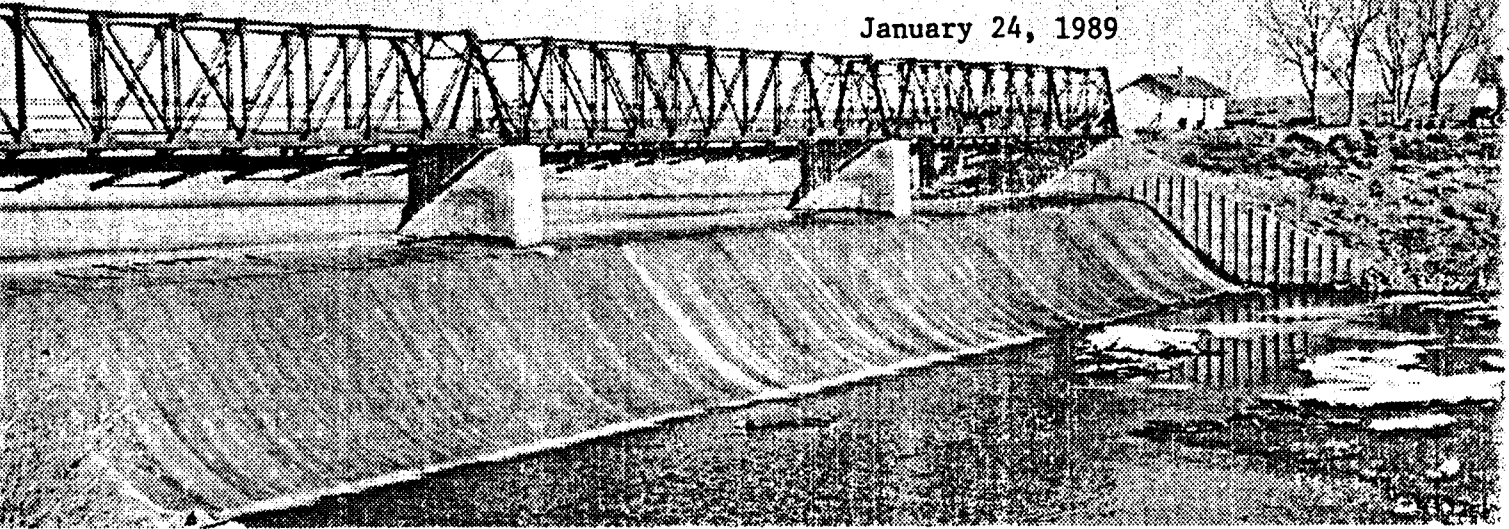
Malta Irrigation District

P.O. Box R

Malta, Montana 59538

Phone 654-1440

January 24, 1989



MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS: --

We want to go on record as being opposed to H.B. #203 and recommend:

DO NOT PASS!!!

We believe that the present law which has been in effect for over 50 years, with regard to voting rights in Irrigation Districts has adequately represented the wishes of the irrigators and feel that there is no need for this restrictive legislation.

Irrigators pay on each proportionate acre that they own, therefore, each acre should be entitled to voter representation under the voting procedure.

The bill does not even follow Federal guidelines as they allow delivery of water to 960 acres.

Limiting a landowner to five votes would severely limit many local landowners in having a fair voice in controlling the operation and costs of his irrigated land.

We recommend: **DO NOT PASS!!!**

Please enter this testimony into the record. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

MALTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT

Jack Greaney
PRESIDENT

EXHIBIT 08
DATE 1/25
HB 203

Malta Irrigation District

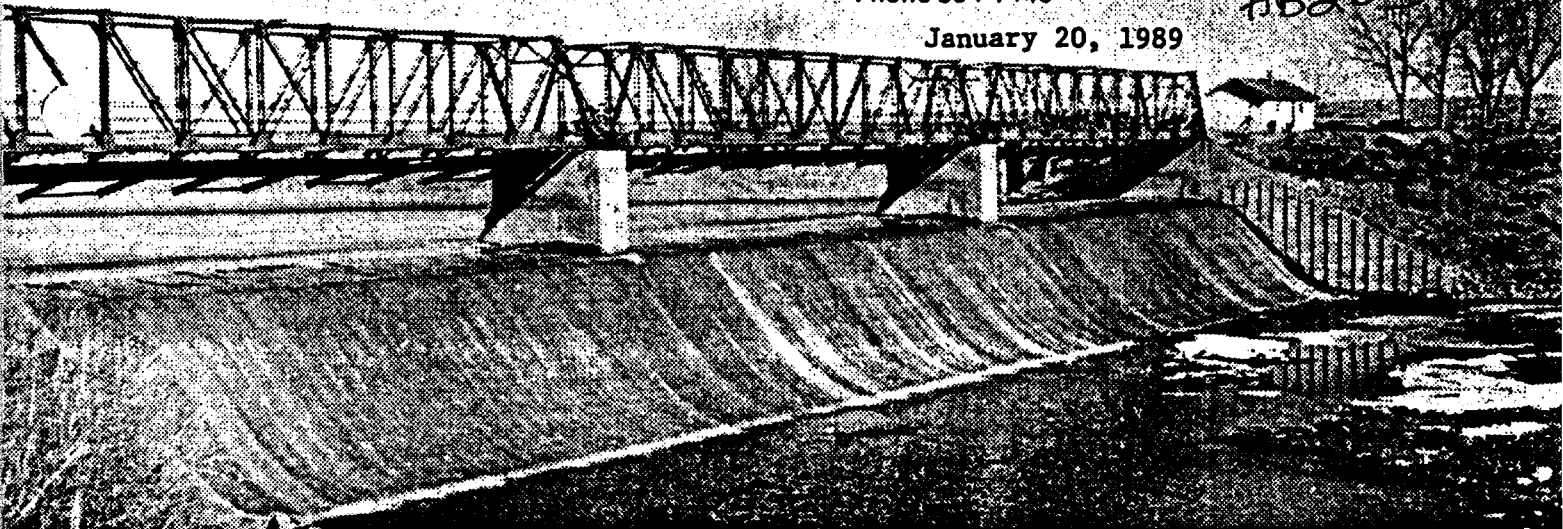
P.O. Box R

Malta, Montana 59538

Phone 654-1440

January 20, 1989

Exhibit 8
1/25/89
HB203



GENTLEMEN:

We are writing to you in regard to H.B. #203 that was recently introduced and that the hearing has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 25, 1989 at 3:00 p.m. in Room #312 of the Capitol.

We are not in favor of this change and feel that the water users paying the taxes should have the privilege of voting their land holdings, as the taxes are assessed on each acre of land holdings.

The sub-divisions also create problems with irrigated land as they are allowed a vote even if they only have an acre, and they contribute very little to the operation and maintenance of the District, but could vote in very expensive programs that would be a detriment to the farmer, such as fencing canals, special turn-outs, road crossings etc.

We have discussed this with several other irrigation districts and they also feel that we should leave the voting the same as it has been since the irrigation districts were established. The voting rights are the same nationwide and don't feel that the change is justified.

We would appreciate anything you can do to get this bill defeated.

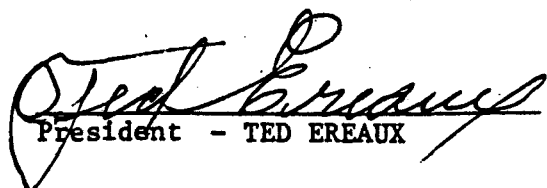
Thank you for your help.

CC:

Swede Hammond
Duane Compton
Ted Schye
Greg Jergeson
M.W.R.A.- Jo Brunner
Francis Bardanouve
Bob Bachini
All Irrigation Districts

Sincerely yours,

MALTA IRRIGATION DISTRICT


President - TED EREAUX

The United States Congress raised the 160 acreage limitation to 960 acres a few years back in recognition of the fact that if irrigated agriculture is to survive it must be allowed to adapt to economic change, more efficient and costly machinery, more efficient water delivery systems, and other changes which have occurred since the 1902 enactment of the U.S. Reclamation Program. HB 203 IS A STEP BACK INTO THE PAST AND SHOULD BE KILLED!

The Glasgow Irrigation District, which has a Bureau of Reclamation Contract for water delivery to 18011 acres, is the last of 8 Irrigation Districts on the Milk River drainage and is suffering from chronic water shortages. This bill will only add to our problems.

STATISTICS

Over 200 acres has 22 landowners - 9339 acres - now vote 253 - under HB 203 would vote 110. This is 21% of votes.

100 to 200 acres has 37 landowners - 6084 acres - now vote 124 - under HB 203 would vote 124. This is 35% of votes.

0 to 100 acres has 44 landowners - 2337 acres - now vote 82 - under HB 203 would vote 82. This is 42% of votes.

LAND REVENUE FOR DISTRICT OPERATIONS COMPARED TO VOTING POWER

Over 220 acres landowners provide 53% of Revenue - % of vote now 57%- under HB 203 would have 21% of votes.

100 to 200 acres landowners provide 34% of Revenue - % of vote now 25%- under HB 203 would have 35% of votes.

0 to 100 acres landowners provide 13% of Revenue - % of vote now 18%- under HB 203 would have 42% of votes.

Note that under HB 203 landowners under 100 acres would have 42% of the votes while only contributing 13% of the revenue needed to operate the District.

Under HB 203 landowners from 100 to 200 acres who contribute 34 % of the revenue would gain voting power by rising from 25% of the vote to 35% of the vote.

The landowners under 100 acres would be the big gainers as they would go from having 18% of the vote and contributing only 13% of the Revenue to having 42% of the vote (double the 21% of the over 200 acres landowners who contribute 53% of the revenue).

This could lead to loss of control by the landowners with 9339 acres to the landowners with only 2337 acres.

In areas with alot of subdivisions the commercial irrigators would also probably lose control of their districts and maybe their ability to repay existing construction contracts and generate needed operating revenue.

The 100 to 200 acre landowners would be pulled down because the smaller landowner group which would control would probably not provide the aggressive leadership required to survive under present economic conditions. They in most cases derive only part of their income from their irrigated land by supplementing this with dryland farming, jobs in town, or livestock production.

DATE 1/25
HB 203

EXHIBIT 10
DATE 1/25
HB 273

TESTIMONY
FOR THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND IRRIGATION COMMITTEE
ON HOUSE BILL 273
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 1989
HELENA, MONTANA

Chairman Bachini and members of the Committee. For the record, my name is Linda Nelson, Representative of House District 19. House Bill 273 moves the sunset date of the Montana Agricultural assistance Program to June 30, 1991.

The Montana Agricultural Assistance Program, as currently administered through the Department of Agriculture, is designed to assist individual farmers and ranchers who are financially distressed by providing counseling, consulting, and farm debt mediation assistance to manage farm credit problems and to cope with the stress resulting from the adverse conditions of agriculture in Montana. (See Attached Brochure)

Through the Agricultural Assistance Program, peer counselors, who are or have been involved in production agriculture and have been trained through the department in finances, stress management, emotional support, and other areas; work to aid distressed farmers and ranchers. Peer counselors also refer producers to other sources of assistance which in many cases may include financial consulting or debt mediation.

Financial consultants, who have a thorough knowledge in the area of agricultural finance are available to evaluate prospects for future operating success. Expert financial evaluation is needed in many cases to determine the extent of financial difficulty and in developing the means for maintaining a cash flow in an agricultural operation. The financial consultant

provides the expertise necessary to address financial options of a farm or ranch operation and effectively communicate these options to a financial institution.

Voluntary debt mediation offers an excellent opportunity for both producer and lender to sit down with a neutral third party to negotiate workable alternatives to foreclosure. The existing debt mediation program offers an excellent alternative to other courses of action such as Chapter 12 bankruptcy. Several debt mediation cases conducted through the existing voluntary program have resulted in creative and positive outcomes, allowing the producers to continue in agriculture and avoid very costly litigations, etc. The various financial institutions represented in the state have, for the most part, been willing to work with the voluntary mediation program and have encouraged participation whenever possible.

The toll-free Farm/Ranch Hotline (1-800-722-FARM) was put into service within the department to provide the means through which a farmer or rancher may request program assistance. The hotline has received approximately 2100 calls since inception in June of 1986. (See attached program status sheet)

The adversities facing our agricultural producers have not disappeared and may, in fact, continue to impact the farm/ranch, rural communities, and overall economy of our state for some time to come. Inadequate cash flow brought on by several years

of adverse economic and climatic conditions continue to plague agriculture. The assistance provided through the Agricultural Assistance Program not only reduces the stress in agriculture and keeps families on their farms and ranches, but in fact, results in saving individuals from mental and physical abuses and even more critically, may prevent a life threatening situation. It is almost impossible to measure the human factor associated with the benefits that are derived from the program. It is certainly not possible to put a value on a life that may be saved as a result of this program.

The funding for this program will be presented in appropriations. We need to realize the dollars spent to fund this program are a very small price to pay for the benefits that are derived. Activities that reduce the financial stresses in agriculture will help to mitigate the forces that continue to cause downward pressure on the agricultural economy and eventually improve long-term recovery for agricultural producers and the state of Montana.

The Montana Department of Agriculture, agricultural organizations and others who support House Bill 273 are here as a resource today.

Exhibit 10
11/25/89
HB 273

MONTANA AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

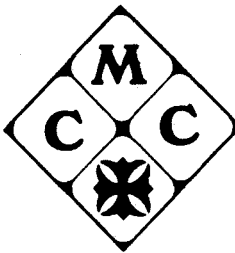
AND FARM/RANCH HOTLINE

1-800-722-FARM



**Referral Services
Financial Consulting
Peer Counseling
Debt Mediation**

**Montana Department
of Agriculture
Keith Kelly, Director**



Montana Catholic Conference

January 25, 1989

EXHIBIT 11
DATE 1/25
HB 273

CHAIRMAN BACHINI AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

I am John Ortwein, representing the Montana Catholic Conference.

Both Bishop Curtiss of the Diocese of Helena and Bishop Milone of the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings have indicated to me that the greatest stress to be found among the people in their respective Dioceses are the people to be found in the agricultural community.

The two Dioceses are members of the Montana Association of Churches and as such have helped in the sponsorship of the Agricultural Assistance Program.

The Montana Catholic Conference supports HB 273 and the continuation of the Assistance Program.





Montana Association Churches

ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
TYLER HALL - 1511 POLY DRIVE
BILLINGS, MONTANA 59102

EXHIBIT 12
DATE 1/25/88
HB 273

REV. LAWRENCE F. SMALL, Ph. D.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TELEPHONE 252-5138

January 25, 1989

WORKING TOGETHER:

American Baptist Churches
of the Northwest

Christian Churches
of Montana
(Disciples of Christ)

Episcopal Church
Diocese of Montana

Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America
Montana Synod

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Glacier Presbytery

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Yellowstone Presbytery

Roman Catholic Diocese
of Great Falls - Billings

Roman Catholic Diocese
of Helena

United Church
of Christ
Mt.-N. Wyo. Conf.

United Methodist Church
Yellowstone Conference

TESTIMONY/AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN BACHINI AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE:

I am Mary Lou Heiken, the Rural Ministries Coordinator for the Montana Association of Churches. I was raised on a farm and my husband and I have farmed/ranched all our adult life.

I am requesting that Agricultural Assistance Program be reauthorized.

The program is to assist troubled farmers and ranchers so they may continue to be productive and self-sufficient. It is the cooperative efforts of volunteer peer counselors, WIFE hotline operators for after hours, public agencies, farm organizations, Montana Department of Agriculture, financial consultants, mediators, the church community, social services, mental health, a employment re-entry program, coordination of scholarships for ag women, emergency aid, and more. Our cooperative efforts yield mega benefits! We have access to informational resources, credibility, and contacts that otherwise are not available. We have a working network that will only get better by working together.

The Ag Assistance Program funded by public tax dollars will expire June 30, 1989. Requests for assistance are at an all time high as the new Farm Credit regulations are being implemented and should peak within the next two year. Also, the financial effects of the 1988 drought will not show up in delinquencies and lack of operating funds until into this winter and spring which could create additional assistance requests.

I have listed several specific values of the program.

- 1) Gives immediate contact to ag people calling in on the hotline.
- 2) It aids farmer/ranchers to put problems in the proper perspective and to level out.
- 3) To focus on problems in order of priority.
- 4) Provides information on new Farm Credit System and FmHA regulations and timelines for self-help.
- 5) To reassure that even though problem solving is tough it is not as insurmountable as it seems.
- 6) Provides financial consultants and mediators.

Why is the program a good buy with public dollars?

- 1) Volunteers contribute thousands of hours of experience and knowledge.
- 2) Program people provide information to callers applying for the new restructure provisions leaving the lenders staff more time to act on the applicants requests.
- 3) Assists people to seek out financial and legal counseling.
- 4) Helps prepare borrowers to be able to participate in mediation.
- 5) The sooner stressed farmers/ranchers get their problems turned around the sooner they are contributors to the system.
- 6) Church community has contributed funding to cover a substantial portion of the cost.
- 7) Provides assistance and information to ease the transition from agriculture should that be a necessity.

A second survey of the Ag Assistance Program users has just been completed. The overall ratio was 88% excellent to good and 12% fair to poor which was a 5% improvement over the 1987 survey.

I have included a couple of quotes from program users:

* _____ talked with us on the phone. He then traveled to our home giving peer counseling and requesting financial consulting. They did a financial analysis which was complex and involved because of the many creditors involved. I feel that because we contacted the hotline, we received help that has kept us on the farm one more year. This was particularly important in view of the 1987 Farm Credit Bill. We avoided a Chapter 12 bankruptcy which was a major concern. We still have a long way to go in order to get back on our feet but there is just that glimmer of hope that we might pull through. I strongly feel that the Ag Assistance Program is a vital tool for rural Montana in these troubled economic times. A sincere thank you.

* Provided me with people to talk to and places to go to get help. I respect the program very much. The way the drought and economy has been many farmers and ranchers need this kind of help.

* * *

With my exposure to agriculture problems, I have learned that all things are not equal and I constantly must remind myself of this.

I am often asked, "Why should agriculture have special concessions?" Agriculture is Montana's #1 industry. Nationally, about one out of every 5 jobs are directly related to agriculture. The Montana Crop and Livestock Reporter states: "In fact, about 25 percent of all jobs in Montana's cities and towns are involved in one way or another with agriculture!" This helps to explain the financial impact agriculture has on both rural areas and cities in our state.

This program is an excellent example of the kind of partnership between the public and private sector which maximizes the use of public dollars addressing the problems in rural Montana. I urge your support of HB 273. Thank you.

Exhibit B
HB 273
1/25/89

WITNESS STATEMENT

10/2

NAME JoAnn Forsness

BUDGET _____

ADDRESS Box 5035, Wolf Point, Mt. 59201WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT? WIFE (Women Involved In Farm Economics)SUPPORT X

OPPOSE _____

AMEND _____

COMMENTS: Chairman Bachini, members of the committee, my name is JoAnn Forsness. WIFE (Women Involved in Farm Economics) appreciates the opportunity to testify here today. I have worked in this program since WIFE started the hotline in Jan. of 1985.

When Montana WIFE came to the 50th legislature to seek funding for the agricultural assistance program we had hoped that by the 51st session we would have experienced a turn around in the crisis facing agriculture. Instead much of our state hosted the worst drought in over 50 years, particularly in the eastern portion.

This program to us is extremely successful. Montana has not had to experience as many of the horror stories as some, keeping borrower and lender on a more even keel.

If the definition of success is a scenario where every farmer remains on the land with perfect financing and lives happily ever after, then that story is yet to be written. Success in this program is measured in smaller increments. The fact that someone calls the number and reaches out for help is a measure of success. That a father does not give up completely and spend his days or nights pacing the floor and crying is a measure of success. That parents can get their fears in order enough to take time with their children to reassure them that the problems being faced have nothing to do with the tear in his new jeans or the new tennis shoes the older child needed.

Children are in no way responsible for the financial problems facing most families, yet they are suffering in a number of different ways. Mental Health talks of seeing seven teen age children in one office either contemplating or attempting suicide in one two week period.

The tragedies suffered by rural families are tremendous, this year. Christmas baskets prepared in one community increased from about twenty last year to ninety-seven that we know about. One young mother of five from ages six months to nine years, whose husband left doesn't feel so alone now since she called and received some Christmas gifts, food and information on other ways to help herself and her family. This mother tries to manage on an income of \$285.00 per month.

Divorce among the younger farm families and stress related diseases in the older families are becoming the norm. Many of these families are not able to afford any kind of health insurance.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

It seems particularly demoralizing for farm families to apply for welfare. We can make it somewhat easier on them by going with them to the welfare office.

The number of after hour calls have been slow. We think it ~~was~~ because of many borrowers waiting to see how the results of the recent bailout bill would work.

If the program is going to exist it must be done correctly ~~on a small scale~~. WIFE recommends continuing the program as it has been with one exception. We feel that one full time employee within the Dept. of Ag. is sufficient.

Twenty-four hour hotline

Reimbursements for the Montana Association of Churches and Score peer counselors.

Financial advisors.

Training sessions held jointly for peer and financial counselors and hotline operators, utilizing Extension service and other agencies whenever possible.

Thank You!

Today I am also testifying on behalf of the following members of the Montana Agriculture Coalition:

Montana Dairymens Assoc.
Montana Cattlemens Assoc.
Montana Cattlewomen
Montana Stockgrowers Assoc.
Montana Farm Bureau
Montana Farmers Union
Montana Cattlefeeders
Montana Woolgrowers

EXHIBIT 13
DATE 1/25
HB 273.

EXHIBIT 14
DATE 1/25
HB 273

NORTHERN PLAINS RESOURCE COUNCIL

Field Office
Box 858
Helena, MT 59624
(406) 443-4965

Main Office
419 Stapleton Building
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 248-1154

Field Office
Box 886
Glendive, MT 59330
(406) 365-2525

TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 273

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Brant Quick. I am here today on behalf of the Northern Plains Resource Council in support of HB 273.

I am sure all of you have read or heard that the farm crisis is over. However, statistics do not bear this out. According to figures from the American Bankers Association 1987 Mid-year Report, Montana alone lost 28 farmers and ranchers per week. That is up from 20 per week in 1986. This means that in 1987, Montana lost 1468 farmers and rancher.

Nation-wide, those figures were up from 106,170 farmers lost in 1986 to 134,000 in 1987. Add to this the effects of this summer's drought, and I think you will agree that things continue to look pretty bleak for agriculture.

With this in mind, we continue to support the efforts of the Agricultural Assistance and Counseling Program. It is our belief that this program serves a valuable purpose. By providing much-needed assistance to agricultural producers, who quite often cannot afford it, farmers who might otherwise be lost are kept on their land. The end result is that farmers stay in there communities where they can continue to support rural business, schools, churches and civic organizations.

I thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony and hope that you will support HB 273.

EXHIBIT 15
DATE 1/25
HB 273

WITNESS STATEMENT

NAME Mary Ann Fissen BUDGET _____

ADDRESS Box 102 Joplin, Mt. 59531

WHOM DO YOU REPRESENT? Montana Ag. Assistance and Counseling

SUPPORT x (HB 273) OPPOSE _____ AMEND _____

COMMENTS: I am a city-born farm wife and have for the past 4 yrs. been a trained, volunteer peer counselor under contract with the Montana State Dept. of Agriculture. I am here in favor of HB 273. Much of my reasoning will be stated in a subsequent testimony as an introduction to those words. I share a short story example of what I find the "gift" called the Mt. Ag. Assistance & Counseling bill has been not only Mt. farmers and ranchers but our state as well.

"Some years ago, when I was given a gold pen, and over time, he has carried it in his shirt pocket as a wonderful reminder. He was young and impetuous then, beginning to take over the reins of the family farm, working even up and down trying to find his "grown up" way through life. The responsibilities seemed enormous and he soon became very depressed everywhere he looked he saw no hope. When it became too much to bear, he called the Mt. Farm hotline - he eventually passed out his name to a peer counselor and after several weeks of work the counselor took a pen and said to him, "If this were a magic wand that I could wave over you, what would you want me to do with it?" "Change my life!" he immediately replied. "Sorry" said the counselor. This magic wand has a magic limited to the four walls of this room. "Then change my circumstances," said he. The same answer came: "Your circumstances are not in this room. She paused, and then said, "Then change me. I am completely discouraged. I am so weary out of my problems, and I am so full of bitterness that it has made me ill." The counselor said, "Then you have worked it's magic if you can see yourself as clearly. He gave the pen to him as a gift - a steady reminder to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things you can, & the wisdom to know the difference."

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

Testimony presented to Chairman Bob Bachini and the House Ag.
Committee:

EXHIBIT 16
DATE 1/25
HB 273

My name is Dale Fossen. I've been a peer counselor since 1985 with the Montana Farm Counseling Coalition. I am also a member of the governor's advisory board that advises the Montana Department of Agriculture concerning the Montana Agricultural Assistance Program. I am here today to testify in support of HB. 273.

I believe we must continue the Agricultural Assistance Program in our state because agriculture is such an important part of our economy. Agriculture is still in a tremendous amount of turmoil and stress all across our state. Farmers and ranchers are still facing tough times and decisions. Past mistakes by farmers, bankers, and politicians are now being addressed by legislation at the national level. This legislation is sometimes very complicated and oftentimes even slower to be implemented. Many farmers and ranchers are confused about the new laws and the new rights that have been given to borrowers. Couple this confusion with stress, indecision, drought, poor farm economy, new technology, etc. and the farmer and rancher of today finds a bewildering array of decisions that need to be made.

The Montana Agricultural Assistance Program has been and can continue to be a valuable source of information and help for the farmers and ranchers of Montana. The program has been instrumental in reopening dialogue between farmers and lenders. Too many times these two groups consider themselves as adversaries instead of partners in agriculture. They look across the table and say that we don't trust you. The peer counselors in the program have brought these two sides together at times when all other things have been tried or have failed. When people get scared, the lines of communication become blocked, thought patterns break down, and mistrust sets in. The ag. assistance program has been a valuable resource in building back the bridges that are needed for good sound decisions.

How do you measure the help given to these people in dollars? You can't. It can only be measured in the building of self confidence and self worth. The job of a peer counselor is to help the

(2)

farmer and rancher sift through his confusion and build back his self-confidence. We provide them information about the law, we help them look forward not backward, we refer them to professionals, we take them to their lenders to talk, we help them organize their records, we give them choices to make, etc. Too many people want to sit on the side lines and not reach out and help our fellow man, our fellow farmer. Too many times government feels impotent to help--not knowing whether or not this program or that program will help. Too many farmers and ranchers out there believe that no one cares about them.

I'm here to tell you that I care. You just can't believe how many people say they didn't know anyone cared; or if they did, they wouldn't take the time or effort to help. The people who work in the Montana Agricultural Assistance Program have shown that people care enough to help. The program has shown that government cares enough to help.

The Montana Agricultural Assistance Program must be continued through the passage of HB. 273. You as a committee can take a stand for farmers and ranchers of Montana. You can say to Montana's agricultural community that this legislature is committed to helping heal our economy. You can stand up with your vote and also say "I care!"



Dale Fossen
Box 102
Joplin, Montana 59531
292-3230

EXHIBIT 17
DATE 1/25
HB 273

33 Forcella Lane
Whitehall, Mt. 59759
Ph. 287-3756

TO: Bob Bachini Chairman:
House Agriculture Committee,
And all Committee Members.

January 25, 1989

RE: HB 273

Good afternoon MR. Chairman and committee members:

My name is Joan Forcella. My husband and I ranch south of Whitehall and as with most farmers and ranchers we are experiencing extremely difficult times and know how important it is to have someone to turn to that will help without first asking whats in it for me.

I also work with the Montana Department of Agriculture and the Montana Association of Churches as a Peer Counselor, tho I prefer to be called a Farm Advocate.

I have come here today to ask for continuance of this program. Both the Agriculture Department and the Association of Churches have spent hundreds of hours in workshops and training sessions so that we, as counselors have the expertise to assist farmers and ranchers to prepare themselves as well as their paper work to meet with their lender. Be he FmHa, Farm Credit Systems, including Fedreal Land Bank, P.C.A. Or any of the private lenders such as Banks And Insurance Companies. We have the knowledge to assist them in preparing financial statements, farm & home plans, restructuring proposals, visits to lenders,

prepare letters to creditors, letters of appealing decisions, etc. We have been thoroughly schooled in assisting them with their most recent packet of papers sent to farmers and ranchers that are at least 180 days delinquent With the FmHA.

These packets were extremely difficult to decipher, and very intimidating, (not to mention the fact that they were sent out during the holidays, that in itself delt them a severe blow.) Without the help of myself and several other dedicated counselors many of these people would have had to hire someone to help fill these out. Already, financially overburdened this would have just added to their difficulties and increased the stress factor 100 fold.

The packets themselves, require a minimum of 4 to 6 hours to prepare properly, provided all information needed is at hand. Just knowing what information is needed to fill them out and how & where to get it is very time consuming and frustrating to our clients.

Can you imagine what it is like to be faced with these types obstacles and to have no one to turn to. Agriculture in Montana is and has been Montanas' major source of income. Oh I know there are those who would dispute that and those, especially outside interests that feel recreation is tops.

But Agriculture can and will remain Montananas most important industry.

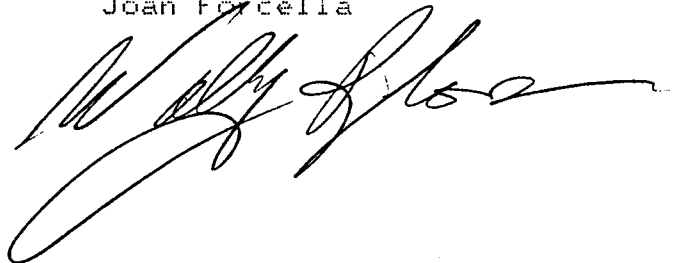
We, as counselors provide a service that is indispensable. This volunteer program has been extremely successful and it will continue if you will put forth your approval.

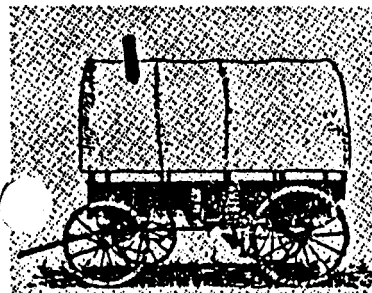
From my own personal knowledge, I know many would have given up had they not had us to assist them, not only with their financial problems but with personal lives as well. Because there is probably no greater family stress than financial problems and the thought that you might lose a place that may have been in the family for several generations. It's almost too much to cope with. We feel we are doing a tremendous service to Montana and we wish to continue that service and with your support we will.

THANK YOU!!

Sincerely,

Joan Forcella P.C.
Joan Forcella

A large, stylized handwritten signature, likely belonging to Mary Ellen, written in dark ink. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.



MONTANA WOOL GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Livestock Building • 7 Edwards St.
P.O. Box 1693
Helena, Montana 59624
Phone: (406) 442-1330

EXHIBIT 18
DATE 1/25
HB 273

Mr. Keith Kelly
Director
Montana Department of Agriculture
6th and Roberts
Helena, Montana 59620

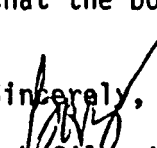
December 16, 1988

Dear Keith,

The Montana Wool Growers association board of directors discussed the Montana Agriculture Assistance program at their recent board meeting in Billings. The operation of this program was reviewed by Mary Lou Heiken, Rural Ministries Coordinator, for the Montana Council of Churches. Director Leonard Grove has attended several meetings on the program and has monitored its activities.

As a result of the discussion, the MWGA board authorized me to write a letter of support for the program urging current funding levels of \$125,000 per year. It is evident by that action that the board feels the program is serving a usefull purpose.

Sincerely,


Bob Gilmer
Secretary-Treasurer

CC Board
Mary Lou Heiken, 1511 Poly Drive, Billings, Montana

VISITORS' REGISTER

Agriculture.

COMMITTEE

BILL NO.

HB 273

DATE

January 25

SPONSOR

NAME (please print)	RESIDENCE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
<i>Everett Snodgrass</i>	<i>Dept of Ag</i>		
<i>Glenn Janssen</i>	<i>W.I.F. ^{Box 5035} Emerg Point</i>	✓	
<i>Mrs Mary E. Daubok</i>	<i>7645 N. Mont Ave</i>		
<i>Mary Ann Fosson</i>	<i>Joplin, MT.</i>	✓	
<i>Dale Fosson</i>	<i>Joplin, MT.</i>	✓	
<i>Serry Christison</i>	<i>Helen Mt</i>	✓	
<i>Brant Quick (NPRC)</i>	<i>21 Jefferson ^{Helen}</i>	✓	
<i>John Peterson -</i>	<i>Mt Catcher ^{Blgo.} Camp</i>	✓	
<i>Mary Lou Hecken</i>	<i>Mt. Assoc. of Churches</i>	✓	
<i>Wiggon Watson</i>	<i>" " "</i>	✓	
<i>Cliff Murphy</i>	<i>Mental Health Assoc. MT</i>	✓	
<i>LED NEWMAN</i>	<i>COUNCIL OF COOPERATIVES -</i>	✓	
<i>John Fischer (hard to leave)</i>	<i>MT. Assoc. of Churches</i>	✓	
<i>Bert Leary</i>	<i>MT. Boatworks Assoc</i>	✓	
<i>Long Murphy</i>	<i>MT. Farmers Union D.T. Falls</i>	✓	
<i>Lena Frank</i>	<i>Farm Bureau</i>	✓	
<i>Dewey Janssen</i>	<i>Wolf Point</i>	✓	
<i>Wally Glaze</i>	<i>Twinn Bridge</i>	✓	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR WITNESS STATEMENT FORM.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

VISITORS' REGISTER

Agriculture

COMMITTEE

BILL NO. HB 203DATE Jan 25th

SPONSOR _____

NAME (please print)	RESIDENCE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
Mrs Mary E. Darchek	7645 N. Mont. Ave		✓
Mrs. ^{Muriel} Taylor	Glasgow MT		✓
Joe Brown	MORA		✓
Alan Mikkelsen	St. Ignatius (FSBC)		✓
DAVID M TAYLOR	Glasgow, MT		✓
John G. Overcast	Chinook, MT.		✓
Bud MAVEDCAMP	MALTA MT.		✓
Robert A. Ellis	Helena King Rd		✓
Dean Hall			✓
Gerry Chuston	Helena mt		✓
William Conzler			✓
Carol Mosher	Mt. St. Colette Thomas Mt. Stockpiles		✓
Morris Barby	mt a. p. a.		✓
Chuck Simpson			✓
Fay Stokes	Box 94 Valer, MT		✓
Wally H. Loe	Jewin Bridge	✓	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR WITNESS STATEMENT FORM.

PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.

ROLL CALL VOTE

AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK & IRRIGATION

COMMITTEE

DATE Jan 25th 1989

BILL NO. 203

NUMBER _____

NAME	AYE	NAY
BOB BACHINI, CHAIRMAN	✓	
FRANCIS KOEHNKE, VICE CHAIRMAN		
GENE DE MARS	✓	
JERRY DRISCOLL	✓	
JIM ELLIOT	✓	
LINDA NELSON	✓	
BOB REAM	✓	
DON STEPPLER	✓	
VERNON WESTLAKE	✓	
DUANE COMPTON	✓	
ORVAL ELLISON	✓	
BERT GUTHRIE	✓	
MARIAN HANSON	✓	
HARRIET HAYNE	✓	
BETTY LOU KASTEN	✓	
VERNON KELLER	✓	
JOHN PATTERSON	✓	

TALLY

(16)

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Mareau Cleary
Mary Lou Schultz
Secretary

BOB BACHINI, Chairman
Chairman

MOTION: motion from Rep Compton to "table"

ROLL CALL VOTE

AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK & IRRIGATION

COMMITTEE

DATE JAN 25th 1989

BILL NO. 273

NUMBER _____

NAME	AYE	NAY
BOB BACHINI, CHAIRMAN	✓	
FRANCIS KOENIKE, VICE CHAIRMAN		
GENE DE MARS	✓	
JERRY DRISCOLL	✓	
JIM ELLIOT	✓	
LINDA NELSON	✓	
BOB REAM	✓	
DON STEPPLER	✓	
VERNON WESTLAKE	✓	
DUANE COMPTON	✓	
ORVAL ELLISON	✓	
BERT GUTHRIE	✓	
MARIAN HANSON	✓	
HARRIET HAYNE	✓	
BETTY LOU KASTEN	✓	
VERNON KELLER	✓	
JOHN PATTERSON	✓	

TALLY

16

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Mary Lou Schmitz
Secretary

BOB BACHINI, Chairman
Chairman

MOTION: Rep Ream motioned a "Do Pass"