



SUSAN B. SWIMLEY

Attorney and Counselor At Law

1807 West Dickerson, #B
Bozeman, MT 59715
Phone: (406) 586-5544
Facsimile: (406) 586-3130

January 8, 2025

Hon. Chief Justice Cory Swanson
Montana Supreme Court
c/o Robert Bird, office of Court Administrator
P.O. Box 203005
Helena, MT 59620-3005
Via email only to: rbird@mt.gov

RE: Bina Peters Associate Water Judge

Dear Hon. Chief Justice Swanson:

Thank you for taking the time to consider my input into the appointment of the position of Associate Water Judge for the State of Montana. As you well know, water is key. The adjudication of water rights impacts all Montanans and not just the case litigants. And of course, whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting.

My multi-year association with Ms. Bina Peters ("Bina") started more than a decade ago. Bina would bring all of the aspects the Water Court needs with her exceptional capabilities leaving her room for addressing the desires of the system as well. Bina, first and foremost, carries all of the qualities we seek in a judge. She is highly intelligent, precise, knowledgeable, focused and well versed in the law. Bina comes to such a position with the added nature and talent of synthesis of facts with a clear style of applying the law to the facts. As you and I have some professional working knowledge of each other, I believe that you will be willing to acknowledge that I am not one to have an over-inflated view of any outcome and I have never said anything nice just for the purpose of saying something nice and I am not the easiest attorney to deal with. In short, if Bina can educate me on water law's intricate and evolving issues and walk me through her analysis of facts and applicable law in order to assuage my professional concerns, that takes some extraordinary skills.

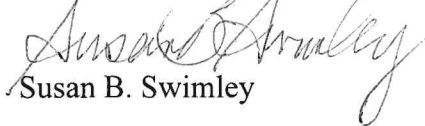
Please do not take the delay in filing this letter as any diminishment of my confidence that you will be proud, should you appoint Bina. Rather, my delay arises from my lack of hurry to lose such a valuable resource to my law practice. Bina is on my short list to call for water attorneys. She has never failed to first ensure no conflict of interest arises before delving into the intricacies of the water law issues. She is not shy to address important and relevant facts which could or should be sought out before analysis begins. Her analysis is thorough and clear.

While I have no clear knowledge of the administrative portion of this position, I can extoll Bina's organizational skills. To the extent she would be responsible in managerial and administrative roles, my experience with Bina tells me such tasks and roles would not delay her nor inhibit her effectiveness.

Bina Peters would be an appointment to the Associate Water Judge position that you could be proud of in years to come. She would bring a perspective from having been a water master and having worked in the system from the other side. She is balanced and judicial in demeanor.

I certainly hope for the State of Montana that you appoint Bina Peters Associate Water Judge.

My personal and professional best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan B. Swimley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Susan B. Swimley