

January 10, 2025

Chief Justice
Montana Supreme Court
215 N. Sanders St.
Helena, MT 59601
Via email: rbird@mt.gov

RE: Support of Appointment of William C. Fanning as Associate Water Judge

Honorable Chief Justice,

I am pleased to write in support of William C. Fanning to serve as Associate Water Judge. Mr. Fanning's demeanor, legal acumen, and practical experience as both water master and practicing attorney make him strongly suited to this position of trust and responsibility.

I was fortunate to get to know Mr. Fanning during law school, where his steady and thoughtful demeanor was immediately apparent. His ability to listen carefully, synthesize complex information, and provide reasoned answers soon also became clear. I am confident he would bring these qualities to the bench to apply and uphold the law in a fair and impartial manner, regardless of the parties before him.

As a fellow attorney, I continue to appreciate his knowledge and perspective and often find myself reaching for the phone to discuss the nuances of water law with him. He, in turn, is ever generous with his time and insight. In this he exemplifies the cooperative spirit of the Montana bar.

Mr. Fanning understands what it is like to be on both sides of the courtroom—as decision maker and as advocate. His time as water master means he can hit the ground running, while his record in private practice reflects an understanding of the complexities of representing clients not only in the Water Court but before district courts and the Montana Supreme Court as well. In short, he possesses the competence, diligence, and experience necessary for Associate Water Judge.

Mr. Fanning would be an asset to the Water Court as it looks ahead to new challenges. I appreciate this opportunity to recommend him for appointment as Associate Water Judge and do so wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,



Nicholas R. VandenBos