

*Flathead County*  
***Board of Commissioners***

(406) 758-5503

Pamela J. Holmquist  
Gary D. Krueger  
Calvin L. Scott



October 22, 2014

The Honorable Steve Bullock  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol, Room 204  
P. O. Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-0801

RE: Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe Reserved Water Rights Compact

Dear Governor Bullock:

Water use plays a vital role in Flathead County's landscape, economy, and land use development. It is for this reason that the Flathead County Board of Commissioners should comment on any water policy or agreements that affects the property rights of our constituents. On behalf of Flathead County, we ask for consideration of the following priorities in the ongoing negotiations of the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal water compact:

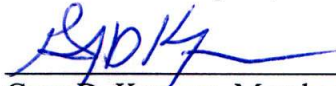
- Our current residential, commercial and municipal water rights should be recognized and protected from call in the future. Negotiations for the compact should ensure adequate water is available for future growth in western Montana.
- Our agricultural economy needs a stable and secure water supply free from conflict to ensure high quality and plentiful crop and livestock production.
- It is our desire that State Water policy makers should engage in negotiations and avoid litigation. To this end, adopted water policies should protect Flathead County and its citizens from the need to uphold their water rights.
- Environmental water needs must be considered in order to protect the aquatic system so important to our fisheries, recreation and tourism. The cultural heritage of ALL Montanans includes protection of our aquatic system for our generation and those to come.
- Basin closures should be avoided, and legally available water for future use in basins now restricted should be acquired through negotiations. We must ensure that Flathead County is not prohibited from growth by a failure to acquire water from basins such as Hungry Horse Reservoir. Our development future depends on the acquisition of water that is currently legally unavailable within the Federal Reserve system. Please ensure this acquisition is part and parcel of a final solution to the water issue.

Gov. S. Bullock  
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Our constituents include all Flathead County residents from varied cultural backgrounds and races. It is our hope that the administration and the 2015 Legislature continues to consider Flathead County's water policy needs in its ongoing negotiations with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribe, and continues negotiations free of racism, partisan politics, and with a desire to avoid protracted litigation.

Sincerely,  
FLATHEAD COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

                  opposed                    
Pamela J. Holmquist, Chairman

  
Gary D. Krueger, Member

  
Calvin L. Scott, Member

c: Attorney General  
Water Policy Interim Committee