



Central Montana Regional Water Authority  
P.O. Box 175  
Roundup, MT 59072

January 1, 2017

Honorable Thomas J. Rooney  
United States House of Representatives  
2160 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Rooney:

On behalf of the Central Montana Regional Water Authority, I write to heartily support your efforts to modify the current "Earmark Moratorium" to ensure the policy does not apply to proposed water resources development projects of the Bureau of Reclamation or the Army Corps of Engineers.

The Central Montana Regional Water Authority (CMRWA) has spent 11 years planning the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System (MJRWS) to provide residents of Central Montana with a reliable supply of high quality drinking water, groundwater from the Madison Aquifer. The CMRWA is a coalition of eight incorporated communities; several unincorporated communities, and many rural areas in central Montana with a long legacy of poor water quality and limited quantity. Attached is a photograph of the water that supplies our constituents' homes. As you can see, the water is simply dirty and unsafe to drink.

In 2014 then U.S. Representative Steve Daines (R-MT) introduced H.R. 4420, The Authorized Rural Water Projects Completion Act. Again in 2015 U.S Representative Ryan Zinke (R-MT) introduced similar legislation entitled The Clean Water for Rural Communities Act, H.R. 3867. This legislation **authorizes** the Department of the

Interior (Bureau of Reclamation) to carry out two Montana water projects including the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System (MJRWS) in accordance with the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System Feasibility Report.

However, due to the fact the authorization of our Water System will benefit only Montanans, it seems to fall under the House Earmark Moratorium and the Natural Resources Committee has declined to schedule a hearing to consider this legislation for the past four years; effectively “killing” this legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives. Please know that the exact same legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate was passed out of Subcommittee and the full Energy and Natural Resources Committee, as the Senate does not consider the authorization of our Water System to be an earmark.

Please know the House legislation to authorize our Water System appropriates **no** funding for the project; instead it simply authorizes the system so that we may “get in line” at the Bureau of Reclamation for future federal funding. We find the fact that an authorization bill falls under an Earmark Moratorium very frustrating, as earmarks generally deal with appropriating dollars to projects. Our legislation does not even ask for funding.

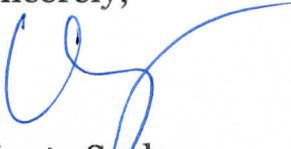
The CMRWA is the first entity in the nation to complete the planning process mandated under the 2006 Rural Water Supply Act for rural water projects. However, we need federal authorization of the system to even be considered for future funding by the Bureau of Reclamation. Authorization will also allow the State of Montana to contribute funding to construction so that we can begin to lay water pipes. We turn to our Congressional delegation for assistance, but find that our U.S. Representative is prevented from moving the legislation we need to become an authorized rural water system project.

Therefore, we are very much in support of your efforts to modify the current U.S. House of Representatives “Earmark Moratorium” to ensure the policy does not apply to proposed water resources development projects of the Bureau of Reclamation or the Army



Corps of Engineers. Please amend the Moratorium so that our constituents may have clean, safe drinking water in Central Montana.

Sincerely,



Monty Sealey,  
Project Administrator

cc: U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke



Roundup, Montana water