

ROY BROWN for GOVERNOR

Working with Montanans for a Stronger Montana 

MONTANA WATERS IN JEOPARDY

By: Roy Brown

Montanans take our water very seriously. We've spent generations managing and protecting this most precious resource, and nearly everything in our state – from farming and ranching to tourism and recreation, depends on our management of our water. That's why I've been shocked and discouraged by Governor Brian Schweitzer's recent support of a bill that gives bureaucrats in Washington, D.C. all of the power to manage Montana's water.

In case you haven't followed this underreported story, some members of Congress, and even some folks in Helena, want to take away our ability to manage our own water in Montana and across the country. Currently the United States Congress is considering the Clean Water Restoration Act. This bill will to drastically expand the power of the federal government and threatens Montana families and communities with an increased burden they should not be expected to bear.

Unfortunately, Governor Brian Schweitzer is among those who support this federal power-grab, despite all the problems it creates in Montana. He's taken the side of extreme environmental groups who contend that the federal government should apply the standards of the Clean Water Act to all waters in Montana, from our major rivers on down to stock ponds and irrigation ditches.

Don't get me wrong: The Clean Water Act has been a largely successful policy that has helped to restore and protect navigable waterways, and as a result, Montana and the rest of the country has benefited. But now, we face a crossroads, and the federal government is moving to take over regulation of all waters, and their inability to grasp the reality of water issues in our state could be devastating to Montanans.

Empowering a Washington, D.C. bureaucrat to regulate our water use in every home, field and business across the state is flat out dangerous. No two areas of our great nation are alike, and a one-size fits all approach will, no doubt, yield disastrous and unintended consequences. In addition, the Clean Water Restoration Act would expand the reach of federal agencies to a virtually limitless level, and it is a direct assault on the rights of states and municipalities to manage our own water resources. In effect, this bill grants the federal government the authority to step in and regulate all activities, public or private, that affect water. Decisions made locally would now potentially be subject to federal review. Common-sense practices that have been in place for decades around Montana might now require a permit from the federal government.

The Clean Water Restoration Act will also carry a heavy price for state and local governments. Montana may be required to adopt water quality standards to comply with this act, and would need to develop a system to monitor and report on the quality of those waters.

Governor Brian Schweitzer and the liberals in Congress support this measure as a way to protect our water – something the stewards of our lands have done for decades. But what the Governor won't mention is that this legislation puts additional risks and costs on our agricultural producers and landowners. Property owners are more likely to be sued, and basic changes could be held up in court simply because all Montana waters are now subject to federal review.

This policy would be a disaster for Montana. That's why I opposed this bill before congress. Montanans need to band together to prevent this terrible policy from taking root. Contact Governor Brian Schweitzer and urge him not to sell us up the river. We depend on our water, and we don't need federal bureaucrats to protect it for us.



Roy Brown
Candidate for Governor