



PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064
FAX (406) 444-3036

Water Policy Interim Committee

61th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

DEBBY BARRETT
BRADLEY MAXON HAMLETT
TERRY MURPHY
DAVID WANZENRIED

HOUSE MEMBERS

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JOE KOLMAN, Research Analyst
TODD EVERTS, Staff Attorney
CYNTHIA PETERSON, Secretary

To: WPIC members
From: Joe Kolman
Regarding: Issue Priority Worksheet

May 21, 2009

WPIC members,

As you are probably aware, the 2009 Legislature did not assign the Water Policy Interim Committee a specific study.

Senate Bill 22 directed the WPIC any issue related to water policy, but as you know the subject of water is a broad and complicated issue. In an effort to help the committee identify and prioritize issues it may wish to examine, I've enclosed some background materials and a priority worksheet.

The worksheet has some general issues that the committee may wish to study. Some of them were studied in part last interim. For other topics, I've included a notation for legislation that addressed this topic. Of course, you are not limited to the subject of the bill. There are several blank spaces on the worksheet for you to include your own topics and rank them.

Please return your ranked priorities to me by June 15. I will compile the results and have them ready for discussion at the July 9 meeting. This may help the committee to further decide what topics to study. I will email you the worksheet as well if you prefer to return it electronically.

The packet includes:

- * A brief history of how the Legislature has studied water policy over the years. The appendixes list the topics studied by the EQC and the prior water policy committee.

- * "Water - Montana's Treasure." This is the report from the 2007-08 WPIC. It includes an overview of the committee's work as well as its findings and recommendations. The committee was assigned a wide array of issues, and there may be some that the current WPIC may want to pursue.

- * The 2009 Water Policy Legislation. This is a summary of water-related bills that passed and died in the last session. Again, there may be ideas in here that the WPIC may want to pursue.

- * "Water Rights in Montana" and "A Guide to Montana Water Quality Regulation." These are handbooks produced by the EQC that provide the basic background on the regulation of water in Montana. (These will be updated this year as part of my EQC duties).

Please contact me if you have questions. I look forward to working with you.