



Water Policy Interim Committee

64th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

BRADLEY MAXON HAMLETT, CHAIR
JENNIFER FIELDER
SHARON STEWART-PEREGOY
CHAS VINCENT

HOUSE MEMBERS

CARL GLIMM, VICE-CHAIR
BOB BROWN
ZACH BROWN
KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

COMMITTEE STAFF

JASON MOHR, Lead Staff
HELEN THIGPEN, Staff Attorney
NADINE SPENCER, Secretary

Dec. 14, 2015

To: Water Policy Interim Committee members
From: Jason Mohr, research analyst, LEPO
Re: Case studies for study of water availability and supply

At the September meeting, the WPIC agreed to solicit case studies from Montana's four hydrologic basins on providing water to growing communities. These case studies were amended into the WPIC work plan and are part of the committee's general study of water availability and supply.

Staff solicited comments through the WPIC's list of 661 interested parties, by sending this email out in mid-October:

The Water Policy Interim Committee is seeking information for its interim study of Water Availability and Supply. Specifically, the committee seeks to evaluate four diverse cases of what you think works well and what doesn't related to supplying water for growing communities. For example, issues associated with the development of a subdivision next to city limits and the subsequent decision to use either individual groundwater wells or a municipal water supply.

Please tell the committee what you think works well, what doesn't, and what the issue is. Suggested, knowledgeable contacts with phone number and/or email address would be appreciated.

The WPIC hopes to use these case studies to explore how the Legislature might support successes and address issues, so feel free to provide suggestions, even if you don't have a specific case study.

WPIC staff received suggestions from 18 individuals or organizations. The suggestions varied widely in detail, description, and subject matter. Some submissions included multiple case studies for consideration. Each submission is included on different colored paper in Tab 6; the table below summarizes the suggestions:

Submitter	Document color	Summary
Alcala	Green	Use of reclaimed water for irrigation purposes
City of Bozeman	Tan	Various issues, including places of use for municipal water rights, stormwater reuse in a closed basin, groundwater mitigation, exempt wells within a municipal service area, nutrient trading for discharge permit compliance
Baldwin	Orange	What works and doesn't work regarding the expansion policies of the city of Bozeman
DEQ	Grey	Issues include: city versus county development, regional water districts, MBMG studies and local water quality districts, funding improvements to existing private water systems, water well drillers
DNRC	Fuschia	Four examples of water for growth created within prior appropriation system: city of Billings, Mountain Water Co. (Missoula), Utility Solutions (Gallatin Valley), Grass Valley French Ditch (west of Missoula)
Gilbertz	Yellow	Residential and commercial development west of Billings
Lawler	Purple	Citizen-at-large on Lower Missouri River Basin Advisory Council with suggestions for case study process
McFadden	Blue	Issues that arise with unannexed subdivisions at town borders
McKinney	Pink	Two study articles: "Linking growth and land use to water supply," which describes four policy options to link land use decisions and growing a water supply; and "Bridging the governance gap: Strategies to integrate water and land use planning," which discusses two visions of integrated land use and water planning.
Montague	Green	Gallatin County's management of area surrounding city of Bozeman by requiring developers to tie into municipal water and sewer if within a certain distance of an existing system.

Montana Association of Counties	Tan	Concern that county powers are being limited by issues related to water availability and supply; suggests legislation be based on site-specific scientific information; and that county commissioners shouldn't determine legal availability of water
Richland County	Orange	Water users association created in 1970s not able to meet demand for a subdivision's second phase and may be supplying water to unapproved lots. City-county partnership allows water and wastewater services outside municipal limits, a process not possible through the federal Rural Water Act and the Bureau of Reclamation
Stockton	Grey	Ten Mile Pleasant Valley Water and Sewer District supplies 315 houses in the Helena Valley
Various	Fuschia	Verbal suggestions made to staff regarding water issues near Stephenville, Polson, Sheridan
Water Well Drillers Association	Yellow	Options and obstacles for cities to grow beyond 1973 boundaries; community water system regulations; and a perspective on the amount of water being discussed
Ziemer	Purple	Description of proposed water mitigation bank in west Gallatin Valley

Each submitter will be invited to the WPIC's January meeting. The committee should direct staff as to what case studies they would like to pursue at future meetings.