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First name: Jim

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: January 4, 2023

Tim Lahey

Butte District Ranger

1820 Meadowlark

Butte, MT. 59701

Dear Tim,

After 32 years with the Butte silver Bow Fire Dept. and now serving as the BSB Emergency Management Director I feel the need to comment on this Project

The Basin Creek Municipal Watershed is the primary (up to nearly 60%) source of drinking water for the Butte area, supporting nearly 35,000 people. The treatment plant ensures that EPA standards are met and has the secondary benefits of saving energy and reducing withdrawals from the Big Hole River. If we lose this source, it would put Butte Silver bow in a spot, we may not be able to recover from, for years and perhaps decades. A major wildfire in the watershed could render the plant inoperable and Butte's most productive and economical water supply would likely be rendered. If the Basin Creek Supply were unavailable for 10 years, the total estimated increase in power costs alone are estimated to up to \$4.3 million and the total costs associated with recovery could be much higher, not to mention the added stress on the Big Hole River.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important project.

Sincerely,

Jim Merrifield

Butte-Silver bow Emergency Management Director