



The Honorable Ryan Zinke
U.S. House of Representatives
113 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Steve Daines
U.S. Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jon Tester
U.S. Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 30, 2015

Dear Congressman Zinke, Senator Daines, and Senator Tester,

Throughout the legislative session the largest farming, ranching, and water use groups across the state rallied together to support the Confederate Salish & Kootenai Water Compact. Along with Farmers And Ranchers for Montana (FARM), these groups labored to ensure that our legislators had the most accurate and reliable information about the Compact, what it accomplishes, and the implications for Montanans should it fail to be enacted.

When presented with the information about the benefits of the Compact, the Montana State Legislature passed the negotiated agreement with strong bipartisan support. This support came from the fact that passing the Compact was in the best interests of members of the agriculture community and water users across Montana.

The CSKT Water Compact doesn't just provide clarity in terms of the federally reserved water rights of the Tribe, it also implements essential water system delivery improvements that will increase efficiency and prevent water from being lost to the irrigation project through seepage.

The Compact also includes specific provisions to protect private property rights, existing water right holders, and ensure that when an on-reservation farmer or rancher passes the farm or ranch to the next generation, the ability to access water goes with it.

The future generations of Montana's farmers and ranchers face numerous challenges—and we believe that engaging in decades of water right litigation should not be one of them. Yet that is exactly what will occur should the Compact fail. By settling the claims of the CSKT in a way that protects existing water right holders, the Compact saves Montana taxpayers and individual water users millions of dollars, and years and years in litigation in the Montana Water Court.

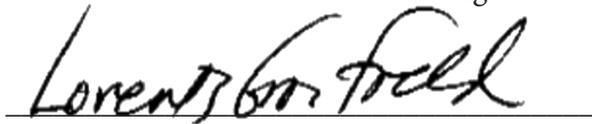
We support the Compact because what happens to Montana's water resources will impact the livelihoods of Montanans for decades to come and the benefits it provides to all water users across our state will ensure the future of Montana agriculture.

It is our hope that as you and your staff begin to work through this complex issue, you will turn to the largest and most trusted agricultural organizations in the state—the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, the Montana Water Resources Association, and FARM— for insight into what the Compact accomplishes and for any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,



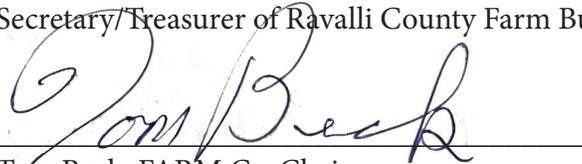
Walt Sales, FARM Co-Chair
Director of Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators



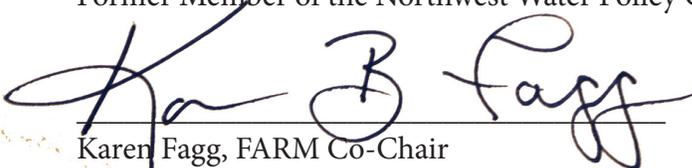
Lorents Grosfield, FARM Co-Chair
Former Member of the Montana State Senate
Former Member of the Reserved Water Rights Compact Commission



Roger Raynal, FARM Co-Chair
Chair of the Montana Farm Bureau Water Policy Committee
Secretary/Treasurer of Ravalli County Farm Bureau



Tom Beck, FARM Co-Chair
Former Member of the Montana State Senate
Former Member of the Northwest Water Policy Commission



Karen Fagg, FARM Co-Chair
MDU Resources, Chair of Nominating and Governance Committee
Former Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Former Billings Chamber of Commerce Chair



Scott Reichner, FARM Co-Chair
Former Member of the Montana State House of Representatives