



The Big Sky Country

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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March 31, 2018,

Governor Steve Bullock

Director MT DEQ Tom Livers

Governor and Director,

The decision by Montana Department of Environmental Quality to classify Mr. Baker of Hecla Mining Company as a “bad actor” is out of step with the intentions of the law. Mr. Baker was not a decision maker at the previous company when concerns surfaced. The company he now heads, Hecla Mining, is one of the “Best Actors” in the industry and is an award winning environmental steward. The concern is that Montana DEQ is listening to out-of-state environmental group’s agenda and not fully weighing the concerns of hardworking Montanans. Montana needs to ensure a balance of a healthy economy and a healthy environment for Montana residents. We can have both. The litigation filed against Mr. Baker and Hecla Mining is only another component of the continuing obstruction of responsible mineral extraction. The cycles of litigation against these mines has almost run out and this is a last-ditch attempt to use our own well intended environmental laws to stop prudent and responsible mining in our state.

This is an anti-economic, anti-growth decision that has major economic ramifications to Northwest Montana and beyond. The people of Montana need to know that their governor and director have the financial well-being of the citizens of Montana in their thoughts and actions. In November, the 65th Legislature was called back to Helena for a special session to address revenue shortfalls from personal/business income tax returns and natural resource extraction revenues. If people are out of work, there will be a drop in personal income taxes and business income taxes. If natural resource extraction continues to be sidelined by decisions such as this, county as well as state budgets will suffer. Montana’s economy has deteriorated at the hands of the radical environmentalists for far too long. The citizens of Montana live in the Treasure State. The current administration has allowed

outside special interest groups to lock those treasures away and the citizens of Montana are the ones hurting.

Governor Bullock, we ask you to consider the negative impact on the working class this decision will have and reconsider the DEQ's actions. Montana is blessed with an abundance of minerals that could be responsibly used to employ many and create revenue for the State for generations.

Regards,

Representative Steve Gunderson

Montana House District 1

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Gunderson", written in a cursive style.