

7-9-1985

# International Joint Commission Hearing

Max S. Baucus

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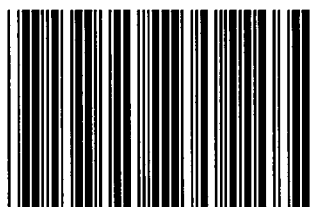
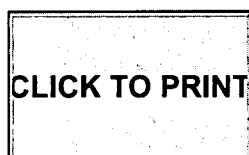
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(2) Subject\* **International Joint Commission**

DOCUMENT DATE\*: **07/09/1985**

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\* "required information"



BAUCUS

STATEMENT BY  
SENATOR MAX BAUCUS  
BEFORE THE  
INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION HEARING  
KALISPELL, MONTANA  
JULY 9, 1985

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION, LET  
ME BEGIN BY WELCOMING YOU TO MONTANA.

AS YOU KNOW I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE  
CABIN CREEK COAL MINE FOR A LONG TIME.

THE CABIN CREEK COAL MINE THREATENS TO  
DEGRADE THE WATER, DIMINISH FISH AND WILDLIFE  
RESOURCES AND POLLUTE THE AIR OF GLACIER NATIONAL  
PARK AND THE FLATHEAD LAKE AND RIVER. I URGE YOU  
TO ENSURE THAT THESE GREAT NATIONAL TREASURES ARE  
NOT DEGRADED.

I URGE THAT THE COMMISSION TAKE THE ACTION NEEDED TO END OUR FEAR THAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE FLATHEAD WILL BE WORSENER BECAUSE OF THIS MINE.

IN 1974, I PERSONALLY VISITED WITH PREMIER BENNETT TO EXPRESS MY CONCERNS OVER THIS PROPOSAL. ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO, I WAS WITH PREMIER BENNETT WHERE ONCE AGAIN I SPOKE OUT FOR PROTECTION OF THE FLATHEAD. OVER THE PAST ELEVEN YEARS, I HAVE MET WITH NUMEROUS FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS TO ALERT THEM OF MY CONCERNS.

DURING THAT TIME PERIOD WE WERE NOT SITTING IDLY BY. WE ARMED OURSELVES WITH SOLID SCIENTIFICALLY BASED DATA TO MEASURE ANY IMPACTS. WE ARE CONTINUING TO BUILD UPON THAT DATA BASE.

DATA COLLECTED THROUGH THE FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY PROVIDES A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR THIS COMMISSION TO BASE ITS REVIEW.

THE TASK BEFORE YOU IS NOT AN EASY ONE. THE FUTURE OF THE FLATHEAD VALLEY, THE FLATHEAD RIVER,

FLATHEAD LAKE AND GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, RESTS ON YOUR SHOULDERS.

A DELICATE AND TENUOUS BALANCE BETWEEN NATURE AND MAN HAS EVOLVED IN THE FLATHEAD. OUR ENVIRONMENT HERE IS UNMATCHED ANYWHERE IN THE LOWER 48 STATES.

FLATHEAD LAKE, THE LARGEST NATURAL BODY OF WATER WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IS A POTABLE SOURCE OF WATER FOR THOSE WHO RESIDE ALONG ITS SHORELINE.

THE FLATHEAD RIVER AND ITS THREE FORKS ARE NATIONALLY RENOWNED FOR THEIR QUALITY. THEY ARE PART OF THE NATIONAL, WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER SYSTEM -- AND THEREBY PROTECTED. THE NORTH FORK OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER, BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION WITHIN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, IS AFFORDED ADDITIONAL PROTECTION.

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK IS AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK AND THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL WORLD BIOSPHERE. THE PARK IS A MECCA FOR BOTH FISH AND

WILDLIFE - GRIZZLY BEARS, BIGHORN SHEEP, MOUNTAIN GOATS, BULL TROUT, CUT-THROAT TROUT, WOLVES, DEER, ELK, MOOSE, EAGLES, BLACK BEARS AND MOUNTAIN LIONS.

ALMOST 1 MILLION ACRES -- IN THE 5.5 MILLION ACRE DRAINAGE ABOVE FLATHEAD LAKE -- ARE PROTECTED FROM DEVELOPMENT. THAT'S AN AREA ALMOST FOUR TIMES AS LARGE AS THE ENTIRE BRITISH COLUMBIA PROTION OF THE DRAINAGE.

THE REMAINING AREAS OF THE FLATHEAD -- WHERE PEOPLE LIVE AND WORK -- HAVE BEEN USED CAREFULLY TO MAINTAIN THEIR HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY.

TO MONTANANS MAINTAINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THIS AREA IS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT.

ON THE BRITISH COLUMBIA SIDE OF THE BORDER, SOME OF THE MOST INTENSIVE TIMBER HARVESTING AND OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE ENTIRE DRAINAGE HAS OCCURRED. YET OVERALL, ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT HAS BEEN PROTECTED.

THE CABIN CREEK COAL MINE THREATENS TO  
DESTROY THIS BALANCE.

THE MINE IS A MASSIVE DEVELOPMENT. IT DWARFS  
ANY LAND USE THAT WE ARE USED TO. BECAUSE OF  
THAT MINOR MISCALCULATIONS IN PLANNING AND DESIGN  
COULD LEAD TO CATASTROPHE. SEDIMENTATION,  
RELEASES OF TOXIC POLLUTANTS, FOULED AIR, LOST  
FISH HABITAT AND VANISHED WILDLIFE COULD BE THE  
RESULT OF POORLY PLANNED DEVELOPMENT.

HOWEVER THE ECONOMICS OF THIS MINE MAKE IT  
DIFFICULT TO TAKE THE ACTION NEEDED TO PREVENT  
THESE KINDS OF CATASTROPHES. THERE IS NO  
GUARANTEE THAT THIS POLLUTION WILL NOT CROSS THE  
BOUNDARY.

AS YOU CONDUCT YOUR WORK, I URGE YOU TO ADOPT  
SEVERAL STANDARDS. FIRST, THE MINE MUST CAUSE NO  
POLLUTION IN MONTANA. THIS STANDARD IS EMBODIED  
IN THE BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS COMMISSION NEEDS TO CARE-  
FULLY EXAMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE PROPOSED MINE

DESIGN WILL WITHSTAND THE VULGARITIES OF WEATHER AND TIME.

IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS A REASONABLE CHANCE OF THE MINE OPERATING IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE MATTER.

THIS COMMISSION MUST GO BEYOND THAT POINT AND PROVIDE GUARANTEES TO THE PEOPLE IN THE FLATHEAD AND THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES THAT THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER WILL BE PROTECTED.

THE STANDARD OF REVIEW SHOULD BE THE STANDARD THAT CURRENTLY EXISTS IN THE NORTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER TODAY.

SIMILARLY, THE IMPACTS ON FISH AND WILDLIFE SHOULD BE EVALUATED USING A STANDARD BASED ON WHAT CURRENTLY EXISTS THERE TODAY.

YOU ALSO MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT THE RIVER FLOWS THROUGH GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, AND SO WILL ANY POLLUTION FROM THE MINE. GLACIER NATIONAL PARK HAS SOME OF THE HIGHEST



RESOURCE VALUES OF ANY NATIONAL PARK IN OUR SYSTEM.

THIS MINE HAS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL TO ADVERSELY IMPACT THE MOST REMOTE PORTION OF THE PARK.

IN CONSIDERING THE PROXIMITY OF THIS MINE TO GLACIER NATIONAL PARK YOU NEED TO REMEMBER THAT WHEN GLACIER AND WATERTON WERE JOINED AS AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE PARK, IT WAS ALWAYS ENVISIONED THAT A BRITISH COLUMBIA PORTION OF THE PARK WOULD EVENTUALLY ROUND OUT THE ECOSYSTEM.

THIS AREA HAS NOW BEEN LOGGED AND EXPLORED INTENSIVELY FOR OIL AND GAS. THE CABIN CREEK COAL MINE PROPOSAL WOULD BE LOCATED A SHORT DISTANCE ACROSS THE RIVER FROM THIS AREA.

WHILE DEVELOPMENT HAS PRECLUDED A BRITISH COLUMBIA NATIONAL PARK PROPOSAL, WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE NEED TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES THAT FIRST CAUSED THIS AREA TO BE PUT FORWARD FOR PARK PROTECTION.

IT IS THESE VALUES THAT THIS COMMISSION NEEDS  
TO STRIVE TO PROTECT.

THE TASK BEFORE YOU IS NOT AN EASY ONE. ALL  
EYES WILL BE UPON YOU.

THE COSTS ARE TOO HIGH, YOU MUST NOT FAIL IN  
YOUR ENDEAVORS.