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Statement to Address Wilderness Legislation

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Senator * or Department*: BAUCUS

Instructions:
Prepare one form for insertion at the beginning of each record series.
Prepare and insert additional forms at points that you want to index.
For example: at the beginning of a new folder, briefing book, topic, project, or date sequence.

Record Type*: Speeches & Remarks

MONTH/YEAR of Records*: July-1987
(Example: JANUARY-2003)

(1) Subject*: Environment
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject* Statement to Announce Wilderness Legislation

DOCUMENT DATE*: 07/06/1987
(Example: 01/12/1966)

* "required information"
STATEMENT TO ANNOUNCE WILDERNESS LEGISLATION
SENATOR MAX BAUCUS
JULY 6, 1987
HELENA, MONTANA

YEARS AGO MY FAMILY SETTLED NORTH OF HERE AMIDST THE RUGGED LANDSCAPE OF LEWIS AND CLARK COUNTY. LIKE MANY OF THEIR GENERATION, MY GRANDPARENTS WERE SOLID, HARD WORKING PEOPLE. THEY WERE CHALLENGED BY THE LAND AND POSSESSED AN UNWAVERING DESIRE TO BUILD A GOOD LIFE FOR THEIR FAMILY IN MONTANA.

THAT GRIT AND PRIDE OF THOSE EARLY MONTANANS PREVAILS TODAY.

HOW IS THIS SO? WHAT GIVES US THIS STRENGTH?

THE ANSWER IS ALL AROUND US.

IT IS THE LAND. IT IS MONTANA THAT MAKES US MONTANANS.

OUR FEELINGS ABOUT OUR LAND RUN WIDE AND DEEP. WE LOVE THIS LAND BECAUSE IT TOUCHES OUR LIVES IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS. THE UNCOMMON
NATURAL BEAUTY OF OUR PLAINS, MOUNTAINS, STREAMS, WILDLIFE, AND VALLEYS ARE UNSURPASSED.

Our abundant natural resources sustain us. Our grain, livestock, timber, mining and tourism are our livelihood. No other state is so rich and fortunate.

For over a decade, farmers, business people, government officials, loggers, campers, miners, snowmobilers, ranchers and rangers each have lodged strong opinions on the future of our vast, roadless lands.

Our conservation community, for example, advocates that out of the approximately 6 million acres of roadless lands over 2.5 million be set aside as wilderness. Our logging and mining industries by and large ask that none be put into wilderness -- that it all be released back to the forest plans. Motorized vehicle users, including snowmobilers and bikers, are concerned about access to their favorite roads and trails.
THOSE OF US WHO LIVE NEXT TO OR CLOSE TO A PARTICULAR AREA FEEL THAT WE HAVE A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THAT PARTICULAR AREA, THAT THAT RELATIONSHIP IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE VIEWS OF OTHERS WHO LIVE MILES AWAY.

IT IS A TESTAMENT TO OUR RUGGED INDIVIDUALISM AND INDEPENDENCE THAT WE HAVE DEFINITE VIEWS AND THAT WE HOLD THEM DEEPLY. IN MY 12 YEARS OF PUBLIC SERVICE NO ISSUE HAS BEEN MORE CONTENTIOUS AND DIVISIVE THAN THE DISPOSITION OF OUR STATE’S ROADLESS AREAS. IN FACT THE ISSUE GOES DIRECTLY TO THE HEART OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MONTANAN.

DURING THE COURSE OF THIS LONG DEBATE THREE SEPARATE BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS, SEVEN PUBLIC HEARINGS HAVE BEEN HELD IN WASHINGTON AND MONTANA, HUNDREDS OF HOURS HAVE BEEN INVESTED IN STUDIES AND PREPARATION, THOUSANDS OF PAGES OF TESTIMONY HAVE BEEN RECORDED AND READ, AND MILLIONS OF WORDS HAVE BEEN SPOKEN.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO FINALLY DECIDE. WE’VE STUDIED THESE AREAS LONG ENOUGH.
THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON I WILL INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO STRIKE A BALANCE BETWEEN RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATURAL RESOURCES AND NECESSARY PROTECTION OF FRAGILE WILDERNESS.

MY LEGISLATION ACCOMPLISHES TWO MAJOR GOALS:

--IT DESIGNATES AS WILDERNESS NEARLY 1.3 MILLION ACRES OF MONTANA'S MOST FRAGILE AND SCENIC LANDS;

--AND, IT RELEASES MORE THAN FOUR MILLION ACRES IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS FOR MULTIPLE USE MANAGEMENT--FOR MINING, LOGGING, OIL AND GAS EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT, AND RECREATION.

THIS BILL WILL HAVE VIRTUALLY NO EFFECT ON MONTANA'S AVAILABLE TIMBER SUPPLY AND RESPECTS LEGITIMATE MINING CLAIMS. THE BILL ALLOWS CONTINUED EXPLORATION FOR MINERALS AND OIL IN SEVERAL IMPORTANT AREAS, INCLUDING A PROMISING NEW PLATINUM DEPOSIT.

AND I HAVE TRIED HARD TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SCORES OF MONTANANS WHO WANT OUR STATE PRESERVED
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS. WE HAVE IN MONTANA THE GREATEST RESOURCE FOR TOURISM AND RECREATION OF THE LOWER 48 STATES. OUR NATION IS HUNGRY FOR WIDE OPEN SPACES, CLEAN AIR, AND NATURAL SPLendor. WE ARE POSITIONING OURSELVES WELL TO CAPITALIZE ON AN IMPORTANT GROWTH INDUSTRY -- TOURISM AND RECREATION.

No single issue will be as important to our state, to our families, and to our future as the decisions we make on how we use our state’s resources.

What Montana needs now is not another decade of debate, another decade of disagreement, or another decade of indecision. What we need now is some security in knowing how we’re going to chart our economic development.

Our timber industry needs to know what areas will be available for logging. Our oil and gas industry needs to know where exploration and development will be permitted. Our mining industry, which is showing some new vitality, must
HAVE ASSURANCE THAT ITS GROWTH CAN CONTINUE IN APPROPRIATE AREAS.

AND ALL OF US NEED TO KNOW THAT THE LAND WE LOVE WILL BE PROTECTED FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

WE CAN'T ACHIEVE PROSPERITY IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF INDECISION AND CONFRONTATION. OUR STATE IS IN TRANSITION. WE ARE POISED FOR NEW VITALITY AND GROWTH. A ROADLESS AREA BILL MUST BE PASSED IF MONTANA IS TO MOVE FORWARD.

IN SHORT, THIS IS NOT A BILL ABOUT WILDERNESS, OR A BILL ABOUT JOBS. IT IS A BILL ABOUT MONTANA'S FUTURE. AND I THINK OUR FUTURE IS BRIGHT. NOT EVERYONE WILL BE COMPLETELY SATISFIED WITH EVERY SINGLE BOUNDARY LINE IN EVERY AREA.

BUT EVERYONE WILL BE SATISFIED THAT WE ARE RESOLVING THE ISSUE AND THAT WE CAN MOVE FORWARD.