

4-26-1988

## Flathead Basin Commission

Max S. Baucus

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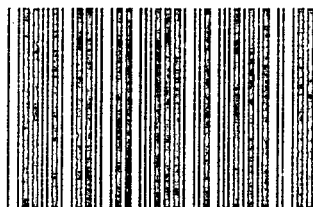
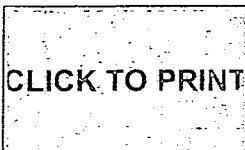
(select subject from controlled vocabulary, if your office has one)

(2) Subject\* Address to Flathead Basin Commission

DOCUMENT DATE\*: 04/26/1988

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BAUCUS

ADDRESS TO FLATHEAD BASIN COMMISSION

BY

SENATOR MAX BAUCUS

APRIL 26, 1988

GOOD MORNING. I UNDERSTAND I'M ACTUALLY  
COMING TO YOU LARGER THAN LIFE TODAY.

I WANT TO THANK BRACE HAYDEN FOR THE INVITATION TO SPEAK TO YOU. I ONLY WISH I COULD BE THERE IN PERSON TO SOAK UP A LITTLE MONTANA SPRING ON THE SHORES OF FLATHEAD LAKE.

AS I WAS PREPARING FOR TODAY'S TALK, I SPENT TIME REVIEWING WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER FOR THIS SYMPOSIUM.

*insert*

THE FIRST THING THAT CAME TO MY MIND WAS OPERATION FLUSH. HOW MANY OF YOU REMEMBER THAT? IT WAS ABOUT 16 YEARS AGO. A GROUP OF US WENT AROUND TO HOUSES ON THE LAKE AND FLUSHED RED DYE DOWN THE TOILETS. THE IDEA WAS TO TEST THE SEPTIC

*Weather  
Call  
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SYSTEMS. THE RESULTS WERE PRETTY DRAMATIC AS WE SAW HOW QUICKLY THE RED DYE RAN INTO THE LAKE.

THE FLUSH TEST WAS REALLY A TURNING POINT FOR THE WAY WE VIEWED FLATHEAD LAKE. IT WAS A STARTLING EXAMPLE OF HOW VULNERABLE THE LAKE IS TO THE ACTIVITIES THAT GO ON AROUND IT.

THEN CAME DABIN CREEK -- THE PROPOSED COAL MINE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA. MANY OF US WERE EXTREMELY CONCERNED ABOUT THE THREAT OF POLLUTION FROM THE MINE. AS A RESULT, WE STARTED LOOKING FOR ~~FUNDING~~ <sup>ways</sup> TO STUDY THE THREAT ALONG WITH THE OVERALL HEALTH OF FLATHEAD LAKE.

TEN YEARS AGO WE SUCCEEDED <sup>change from original #2</sup> THE EPA AGREED TO ~~FUND~~ <sup>support</sup> THE FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY. THE STUDY WAS AREA WIDE -- THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY. WE GOT A GRANT FOR \$2.5 MILLION THAT STRETCHED OVER A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD.

AS MANY OF YOU REMEMBER, IT WAS AN UPHILL BATTLE, AND IT TOOK A LOT OF ARM TWISTING IN

WASHINGTON TO KEEP THE MONEY COMING. BUT WE  
SUCCEEDED.

AS A RESULT, DURING THE PAST DECADE RESEAR-  
CHERS HAVE GATHERED <sup>change</sup> BASELINE DATA TO ASSESS THE  
HEALTH OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN AND FLATHEAD  
LAKE. THAT DATA NOW CAN BE USED TO MAKE WISE  
DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THIS VERY  
SIGNIFICANT WATER RESOURCE.

EARLIER IN THIS CONFERENCE YOU HEARD FROM THE  
~~THE~~ SCIENTISTS WHO HAVE BEEN QUANTIFYING, INVES-  
TIGATING AND TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURAL  
RESOURCE KNOWN AS THE FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN.

~~ON BOTH A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVEL,~~  
THE FLATHEAD BASIN IS TRULY A UNIQUE RESOURCE.  
ITS SPLENDOR IS UNMATCHED.

FLATHEAD LAKE IS PURE. FEW BODIES OF WATER  
IN THE WORLD MATCH IT FOR PRISTINE QUALITY.

AT THIS MOMENT, I'M <sup>change</sup> SPEAKING NEXT TO ANOTHER  
BODY OF WATER, THE POTOMAC RIVER. I DO A LOT OF  
RUNNING IN A PARK NEXT TO IT. THERE WAS A TIME,

NOT TOO LONG AGO, WHEN THE POTOMAC WAS ONE OF THE  
FILTHIEST STREAMS IN THIS COUNTRY. IT'S BETTER  
NOW. BUT <sup>on</sup> A WARM SUMMER RUN CAN ~~STILL BE AN~~  
~~AROMATIC EXPERIENCE.~~

*you still  
know it's ~~there~~ there  
and that's not because  
you can see it.*

WHEN I COMPARE THOSE RUNS ALONG THE SMELLY  
POTOMAC TO A BRISK SWIM IN FLATHEAD LAKE, I KNOW  
OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS CLEAR.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO PROTECT THIS PRECIOUS  
MONTANA RESOURCE.

IT'S ONLY BEEN THROUGH THE CONSCIOUS EFFORTS  
AND DILIGENT PLANNING OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU THAT  
FLATHEAD LAKE IS AS CLEAN AND PURE AS IT IS TODAY.

*It's actually*  
~~WHEN WE LOOK AT FLATHEAD LAKE, ITS GOOD~~  
~~HEALTH IS~~ NOTHING SHORT OF PHENOMENAL. THE LAKE  
IS LOCATED DOWNSTREAM FROM A MAJOR AGRICULTURAL  
AREA. IT'S WITHIN AN AREA EXTENSIVELY MANAGED FOR  
TIMBER PRODUCTION. AND IT'S THE HOME OF ONE OF  
THE MOST IMPORTANT ALUMINUM PRODUCERS IN THE  
WORLD.

*add*

EVEN IN THE EVERGREEN AREA, WHERE RESIDENTS RELY ON A SEPTIC SYSTEM THAT COULD BE A SOURCE OF SERIOUS POLLUTION, THE BALANCE OF GOOD HEALTH IS BEING MAINTAINED.

BUT THE LAKE IS ONLY PART OF THE RESOURCE WE NEED TO PROTECT. PICTURE IN YOUR MIND FOR A MINUTE WHAT MAKES UP THIS BASIN.

FIRST, OF COURSE, IS THE LAKE.

NEXT THERE ARE THE THREE FORKS OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER, ALONG WITH THE SWAN, THE WHITEFISH AND THE STILLWATER RIVERS. EACH CONTRIBUTES TO MAKING THE BASIN WHAT IT IS.

FINALLY, REACH OUT A LITTLE FURTHER AND WE PULL IN THE GEMS OF THE NORTHERN ROCKIES -- GLACIER ~~NATIONAL~~ PARK, THE BOB MARSHALL WILDERNESS AND THE MISSION <sup>S</sup>~~MOUNTAINS~~.

THIS IS THE WHOLE OF THE FLATHEAD BASIN. ITS MAGNIFICENCE AND BEAUTY ARE AWE INSPIRING. IN THE MOMENTS WHEN WE ARE QUIET, AND WE OPEN OURSELVES TO THE SPLENDOR THAT SURROUNDS US, WE CAN

GENUINELY FEEL IN OUR SOULS THE GIFT WE'VE BEEN GIVEN.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, BEING THE HUMANS THAT WE ARE, WE CAN BECOME COMPLACENT. ~~ABOUT ALL THAT WE HAVE.~~ IF WE ALLOW A LITTLE SLIPPAGE HERE, OR A LITTLE DEGRADATION THERE, THIS TREASURE WILL SOON BE LOST.

*delete 3 sentences*  
*change*  
FORTUNATELY THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE ARE FIGHTING TO KEEP THAT FROM HAPPENING. YOU CARE! THAT SHOWS IN THE EFFORT YOU'VE PUT INTO PROTECTING THE BASIN. IT SHOWS BY YOUR PRESENCE HERE TODAY, *and by* THE FRUITS OF YOUR LABOR. ~~ARE ABUNDANT.~~ YOU SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

I KNOW I'M PROUD OF WHAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO DO *to help* ~~WITH YOU TO PROTECT THE FLATHEAD AREA.~~

TOGETHER WE GOT THE THREE FORKS OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER INCLUDED IN THE WILD, SCENIC AND RECREATIONAL RIVER SYSTEM.

~~AS I MENTIONED EARLIER,~~ *W* WHEN THE CABIN CREEK COAL MINE WAS PROPOSED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, WE

SUCCEEDED IN GETTING EPA TO CONDUCT THE FLATHEAD RIVER STUDY.

THAT EFFORT WILL PAY OFF LATER THIS SPRING WHEN THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION ISSUES ITS REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED MINE.

THE STUDY ALSO SHOWED THE VULNERABILITY OF FLATHEAD LAKE TO PHOSPOROUS POLLUTION. ~~THE FIN~~  
~~DING~~ <sup>that</sup> SPURRED FLATHEAD CITIZENS TO TAKE THEIR CASE TO THE LEGISLATURE, AND PHOSPHATE-BASED DETERGENTS ARE NOW BANNED IN THE BASIN.

~~ON ANOTHER FRONT,~~ <sup>W</sup> WHEN WE REALIZED THE RISK OF CONTAMINATION TO THE BASIN'S AIR QUALITY, THE SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES TOOK ACTION AND HAD THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE BASIN RECLASSIFIED AS A CLASS ONE AIRSHED.

WHILE THE TRIBES HAD THE LEGAL AUTHORITY TO TAKE THIS STEP ON THEIR OWN, THEY DIDN'T OPERATE IN A VACUUM. THEY WERE JOINED BY THE FLATHEAD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND THE MAJOR INDUSTRY IN THE BASIN, THE COLUMBIA FALLS ALUMINUM PLANT.

THE FLATHEAD BASIN STUDY LASTED FIVE YEARS. WHEN IT WAS DRAWING TO A CLOSE, THE PEOPLE OF THE FLATHEAD VALLEY SAW THE NEED TO CONTINUE THE PROJECT -- TO MAKE IT AN INSTITUTION.

THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF <sup>add</sup> JUSTICE JEAN TURNAGE, A STATE SENATOR AT THE TIME, AND GOVERNOR <sup>Jed</sup> SCHWINDEN, THE FLATHEAD BASIN COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED. IN FACT, IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO THIS MONTH THAT TED BROUGHT THE BILL AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION TO THE EDGE OF THE LAKE AND SIGNED IT IN A SPECIAL CEREMONY AT YELLOW BAY.

TODAY'S MEETING IS A TRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF THE COMMISSION. IT'S VITALITY IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN NEIGHBORS WORK TOGETHER TOWARD A COMMON GOAL.

BUT WHAT'S DOWN THE ROAD? YOU AND THE COMMISSION WILL CONTINUE FACING TOUGH CHALLENGES. BECAUSE THE FLATHEAD BASIN IS A LIVING, DYNAMIC ENTITY, IT WILL CHANGE -- THE WORLD AROUND IT WILL CHANGE. EVENTS WE CAN'T EVEN IMAGINE TODAY WILL LOOM AS THREATS TO THE FLATHEAD IN THE FUTURE.