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Dear Montana R-CALF USA Members and Other Allotment Owners and Landowners,

If you or the prior owners of your property or grazing allotments have groundwater or surface water that was put into use prior to July 1, 1973 to water livestock and for domestic purposes, you should take action by June 30, 2019 to protect your water rights.

The action you should take is to file with the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) a claim for all your water rights that you have not previously filed that meets the new HB 110 requirements discussed below.

The Montana Legislature passed HB 110 that reopens the window for Montana landowners and allotment owners to obtain enforceable water rights. The window to file your claim closes on June 30, 2019. If you do not make a claim by then, your water rights may become subordinate to other rights filed prior to July 1, 1973 or filed during this currently reopened window.

You should have already received a "Notice of Opportunity to File for Exempt Water Rights" from the DNRC regarding your right to file to protect your water rights.

The purpose of our letter is to urge you to file your claims for your domestic or stock water rights before June 30, 2019. **This may be your last opportunity to establish an enforceable claim for your water rights and we do not want you to miss out on this important opportunity.**

Be sure to give yourself enough time to fill out your claims and to secure supporting information such as maps and historic appropriations/decrees, if applicable. In other words, do not wait for the last minute to try to complete the rather detailed claim forms. If you have Internet access, you should go to <http://dnrc.mt.gov/hb110> to learn more and to obtain the forms you need to file your water rights claims. If you do not have Internet access, you should call the DNRC at 406-444-0560 and ask about the HB 110 water rights claims.

If you are an allotment owner, you may want to obtain proof of your preexisting water rights from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. You may need to file a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to obtain such proof. We have a sample FOIA request on our website under "Issues," "Property Rights," or you can call Maxine Korman to learn more at 406-648-5536.

The most important message we can express to you is this: **Do not miss this opportunity to file a claim for your stockwater and domestic use water rights before the June 30, 2019 deadline.**

Sincerely,

Shad Sullivan, Chair Private Property Rights Committee

Bill Bullard, CEO