

BILL: SB324

WHAT IT DOES: Allows Increased Selenium Pollution in Montana's Waters

CFC POSITION: **OPPOSE**

ACTION: Contact Senate Natural Resources Committee



STOP the Selenium Pollution bill
Contact the Senate Natural Resources Committee

Background:

Lake Kooconusa and the Kootenai River watershed near the Montana-Canada border support amazing populations of bull trout, rainbow trout, and kokanee salmon. But these populations are **currently threatened by high concentrations of selenium.**

Selenium is highly toxic to fish, causing deformities, harming reproductive systems, reducing growth, and increasing winter stress syndrome in juvenile fish. This pollutant can also cause major effects across food webs. In researching the issue the MT Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) found that:

- 95% of the selenium in Lake Kooconusa is from mining in the Elk River valley of British Columbia
- Selenium concentrations measured in the Elk River have been consistently rising over time.
- Current plans call for mine expansion, plus creation of four new mines
- If approved, these new Canadian mines would likely result in increased selenium concentrations in the Elk River and downstream waters (Lake Kooconusa and the Kootenai River)


In 2020, after years of study, professional input, and public participation, DEQ proposed a common-sense water quality standard for to protect Montana waters from this dangerous pollutant. **Now, a handful of lawmakers would like to see that standard reversed, exposing Montana's waters to more transboundary mining pollution, and putting threatened fish populations at even greater risk.**

What SB324 would do:

- **Repeal** an existing DEQ Rule that protects Lake Kootcanusa and the Kootenai River by raising the site-specific selenium standard.
- **Reverse** the DEQ's nearly decade-long effort to gather data, evidence and public input on the selenium rule.
- **Default back to the old selenium standard**, which is not protective of Montana's water quality, fisheries or other aquatic life.

Selenium Source

- Selenium (Se) is from historic and current coal mining in the Elk Valley, B.C.
- 4 mines in operation.
 - 4 new mines in the environmental assessment (EA) process



From: https://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/DEQAdmin/BER/Documents/AGENDA/DEQ_SMS.pdf

It's past time we acted to protect Montana's waters from new, transboundary mining pollution! Please help **stop this bill from moving any further through the legislative process.** Action is needed immediately.

What you can do:

Contact the Senate Natural Resources Committee BY 2 PM, Wed. Feb. 24 and tell them that SB 324 is a handout to Canadian Mining companies who are polluting Montana's waters. You can send a message to individual committee members through the links below:

Senate Natural Resources Committee Members:

Member	Assignment
Jeffrey W Welborn (R) SD 36	Chair
Pat Flowers (D) SD 32	Vice Chair
Jason D Small (R) SD 21	Vice Chair
Duane Ankney (R) SD 20	Member
Bob Brown (R) SD 7	Member
Jill Cohenour (D) SD 42	Member
Bruce Gillespie (R) SD 9	Member
Brian Hoven (R) SD 13	Member
Tom Jacobson (D) SD 11	Member
Mike Lang (R) SD 17	Member
Ryan Lynch (D) SD 37	Member
JP Pomnichowski (D) SD 33	Member

Thank you for speaking up for clean water in Montana!