

Create a better future...

In our daily news we are hearing about fires, floods, droughts and the unpredictability of climate change forecast fifty years ago. We have population increases in the state and are attracting tourism to this magnificent "last best place". We have uncertainties about the sustainability of our fresh water sources and the integrity of our Madison Aquifer. We value our healthy croplands and grazing lands, wide open spaces, clean air and clean water (except for all the mining wastes), the river's edge trail, hiking, boating and other recreational activities, beautiful sunrises and sunsets, arts and music, and a warm and inviting community.

We are at a critical turning point in our community. We are seeing a foreign company bring perhaps the largest industrialized slaughter complex in the country to our prime agricultural lands in Cascade County. If this complex is developed we will face a very different world than the one we are now in. The scientific research has an abundance of studies on existing slaughter complexes describing the adverse environmental effects on our land, air quality, water quality and quantity. Why would we want to risk our prime farmland, clean water and quality of life for the types of proposed industrialized manufacturing and slaughter that have documented environmental risks and social quality of life risks with often irreparable damage?

Great Falls recently was acknowledged as being in the top 100 most livable cities with 50,000-75,000 population and also recognized as in the top ten best places to start a small business. We have so many opportunities to expand tourism, attract small businesses and expand our culturally rich and friendly community. This would likely be reversed with the presence of this proposed large manufacturing and slaughter enterprise in our prime agricultural crop and grazing land. It would certainly not create the kind of community which would encourage our young people to stay or attract millennials to locate here.

As a native Montanan and citizen of Great Falls and Cascade County I encourage everyone to learn the facts about the environmental risks to our water, air and land as well as the social impacts of decreased property values, increased crime, difficulty recruiting health care professionals, teachers and other professionals as well as potentially decreased tourism. We, as a greater community, all have a vested interest in maintaining the quality, quantity and sustainability of our water and our quality of life. It is my job and your job to make responsible decisions.

It is up to us to stop this environmentally challenging industrial use, protect our open spaces and croplands, and manage our water resources optimally. It is our collective responsibility as citizens and government officials to be well-informed before we make decisions. It is time to learn the facts from the research and time to take action to prevent this proposed massive industrialized slaughter complex. We have an opportunity to create a different and better vision for sustainable economic growth without adverse environmental and social consequences. We are all responsible for the environmental, social and moral legacy we leave to today's children and future generations in this magnificent "last best place" we call our home.

523 Words

Respectfully,

Carolyn K. Craven

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