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Ravalli County Planning Dept.

Jan. 12, 2015

Commissioners:

Carlotta Grandstaff, representing Bitterrooters for Planning, a local citizen's organization with more than 400 members.

Your Jan. 8 vote to allow the construction of homes and septics in the flood fringe left me, and many others in this community, in utter disbelief.

You heard day-long testimony from credible speakers about the danger and foolhardiness of allowing homes and septics in the flood fringe.

You were given abundant data and valid scientific, legal, economic and public safety evidence demonstrating that building in the flood fringe is dangerous and economically harmful.

The Bitterroot Conservation District, Bitterroot Trout Unlimited, the Bitterroot River Protection Association, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and numerous outfitters, guides, attorneys and citizens all submitted credible evidence and relevant data about the harm that would occur to people, private property and the local economy if homes and septics were allowed in the flood fringe.

This river is an economic driver in this community. You heard evidence-based testimony that the fly-fishing economy alone brings in \$28 million annually to this community, and yet you said you would not consider it. That surely makes you the only elected Republicans anywhere in the United States who would disregard a multi-million dollar clean, local industry.

At last Wednesday's hearing, no one submitted any evidence or data to prove that building in the flood fringe would be safe. No one testified or submitted any evidence that building in the flood fringe would be legally defensible. No one offered any evidence that it would be economically beneficial.

By disregarding the preponderance of evidence supporting restrictive floodplain regulations, the board fails to take the hard

look necessary to protect the community from floods. Indeed, by disregarding sensible, evidence-based data from a broad coalition of citizens, by rejecting a common-sense compromise offered by Chris Clancy and supported by numerous citizens, and by actually removing a public health and safety measure, you would put the entire community at risk of flood hazards. Please tell me, what governing body anywhere would eliminate a measure that protects public health and safety?

In closing, I would like for each one of you to explain to the people of this community why you voted to allow homes and septic tanks in the flood fringe in the absence of any submitted evidence or data proving it would be safe to do so, when you received abundant evidence proving it would not. You are obligated to explain your vote, and I ask you to do so before the end of this hearing today.