



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
MONTANA

Sandy Scherer, Paralegal
Department of Environmental Quality
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
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Helena, Montana 59620-0901
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RE: Selenium Standards for Lake Koocanusa & Kootenai River Rulemaking

October 29, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is a non-profit conservation organization run by a diverse set of volunteer leaders from across the state. We represent more than 3,000 dues-paying resident sportsmen and women.

We strongly support DEQ's proposed selenium standards. Our organization and specifically, members of the northwest Montana region, are aware that selenium loads have been increasing over time in the Elk River, British Columbia, Canada, posing a threat to fish, wildlife and human health, due to coal mining operations and runoff from associated spoil piles. These impacts don't stop at the border, and will affect our fisheries and water sources downstream here in Montana. Historically, extensive fish tissue monitoring has been conducted in Lake Koocanusa to assess the potential impacts of selenium from the Elk River watershed and more recently, nutrients in Lake Koocanusa and the Kootenai River watershed downstream of Libby Dam. With respect to selenium specifically, Montana BHA applauds the formation and work of the Lake Koocanusa Monitoring and Research Working Group. Efforts of this multi-agency collaboration have produced datasets that indicate a need for ongoing downstream monitoring. Montana BHA supports the adoption of site-specific water quality selenium standards for Lake Koocanusa and Kootenai River as a preventive measure to support healthy waters and aquatic life.

Sincerely,

Molly S. VandeVoort, MPH, Flathead Board Member
Montana Chapter, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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