1	BEFORE THE BOARD OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
2	OF THE STATE OF MONTANA
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5	BOARD MEETING)
6	DECEMBER 8, 2017)
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8	TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
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10	Heard at Room 111 of the Metcalf Building
11	1520 East Sixth Avenue
12	Helena, Montana
13	December 8, 2017
14	9:00 a.m.
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17	BEFORE CHAIR CHRIS DEVENY;
18	and BOARD MEMBERS JOHN DEARMENT,
19	DEXTER BUSBY, TIM WARNER,
20	HILLARY HANSON, and JOHN FENTON
21	(All by telephone)
22	
23	PREPARED BY: LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR
24	COURT REPORTER, NOTARY PUBLIC
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1	WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were
2	had and testimony taken, to-wit:
3	* * * *
4	CHAIR DEVENY: Good morning, everybody.
5	I'm Chris Deveny, Chair of the Board of
6	Environmental Review. I'd like to welcome you
7	here. I'd like to call this meeting to order.
8	And Lindsay, would you take the roll call and see
9	if we have a quorum.
10	MS. FORD: Chris Deveny.
11	CHAIR DEVENY: Here.
12	MS. FORD: John Felton.
13	MR. FELTON: Here.
14	MS. FORD: Dexter Busby.
15	MR. BUSBY: Here.
16	MS. FORD: Hillary Hanson.
17	MS. HANSON: Here.
18	MS. FORD: Tim Warner.
19	MR. WARNER: Here.
20	MS. FORD: John Dearment.
21	MR. DEARMENT: Here.
22	MS. FORD: Chris Tweeten.
23	(No response)
24	MS. FORD: I don't hear from him yet.
25	CHAIR DEVENY: So everybody but Chris.

We have a quorum. We'll go ahead and continue.

This is the first telephonic board meeting of this

Board, and so since we don't really know each

4 other very well yet, and we certainly don't

5 recognize each other's voices, I'd really like to

6 remind Board members when they speak up to please

7 state who they are so our Court Reporter can be

accurate in getting who's speaking, and so

9 everybody else knows as well.

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Our first order of business is review and approval of the minutes. So you should have the minutes in your Board packet. I believe there may be an amendment being proposed by DEQ and our attorney Sarah Clerget. George.

MR. MATHIEUS: Madam Chair, we do propose an amendment to the minutes. It's in Section III.C.1. It's following Hearing Examiner, we propose that "for all procedural matters" be added to the text.

MS. CLERGET: Madam Chair, I apologize for my voice, everybody. I agree with that, and I think the transcript reflects that.

MR. MATHIEUS: Correct.

CHAIR DEVENY: So could there be a motion that we include that amendment, change into

1 the minutes of the last meeting.

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: I'll move it. Would somebody second it?

MR. BUSBY: I'll second it. Dexter Busby.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Dexter. It's been moved and seconded. All in favor of that amendment, please say aye.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. Thank you. I also have an addition I'd like to the minutes. This just refers to the very last statement in the general public comments. I would like the minutes to reflect that we had discussed acknowledging former Board members Joan Miles, Marietta Canty, Robin Shropshire, as well as Chris Tweeten who continues to serve on this Board, acknowledging their public service and their work. So if we could just have that added to the minutes, and I'll make that in a motion. Could I get a second on that?

MS. HANSON: This is Hillary. I second.

CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. Thank you. 1 All in 2 favor, please signify by saying aye. 3 (Response) 4 CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed? 5 (No response) Thank you. So now we 6 CHAIR DEVENY: 7 need a general motion, if there are no further amendments, just approving the minutes of the last 8 meeting as we voted on those amendments. 9 10 MR. DEARMENT: This is John. 11 MR. BUSBY: This is Dexter. I'll second 12 it. 13 CHAIR DEVENY: They've been moved and seconded. All in favor, please say aye. 14 15 (Response) 16 CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed? 17 (No response) 18 CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. The minutes have 19 been approved. Thank you. 20 Our next order of business is to review 21 the 2018 meeting schedule, and so I'd like to 22 refer you again to, in your packet, you should 23 have the executive summary with some suggested 24 dates. Before we move along with those, there has

been a couple of changes, and I'd like to point

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1 those out to you.

April 2nd is a Monday. We need to move that to Friday, which would be April 6th. And December 8th is a Saturday. I don't think we want to meet then, so we're going to move that back to December 7th.

So these dates were established after
Board members were contacted to see where we had
the least conflicts for upcoming meeting dates.
So unless, George, you had anything to add, I'm
just going to ask the Board if they have any
discussions about those dates, or if we could have
a motion to approve those with those changes.

Do Board members have any comments, issues?

MR. FELTON: Madam Chair, this is John Felton. I do have a conflict on February 9th, but the other dates are fine with me.

CHAIR DEVENY: That works for everybody else, though?

MS. HANSON: Yes.

CHAIR DEVENY: I'd like to entertain a motion to approve these dates for the Board's meeting schedule for 2018.

MS. HANSON: This is Hillary. I move we

1 approve these dates.

CHAIR DEVENY: It's been moved. Is there a second?

MR. FELTON: John Felton will second.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you. All in favor, please say aye.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. We've set the schedule, so get it in your calendars, folks. Thank you very much.

Our next item of business is the briefing items, and we'll start with the contested case update by Sarah Clerget, our Board attorney, and let's first start with the enforcement cases that have been assigned to her as Hearing Examiner.

MS. CLERGET: All right, everybody. Let me know if you can't hear me. I apologize again for my voice.

The first two cases on your agenda are essentially mirrors of each other, basically the same case, for Copper Ridge and Copper Ridge Reflections, and both of those were set for

hearing on January 9th through 11th.

I had a status conference this week I think or last week with the parties, and we actually are going to have to move those hearing dates. They are getting back to me. We're going to have another status conference next week to get hopefully another hearing on the schedule relatively quickly. But we're ready to move that one to hearing as soon as we can get that schedule figured out.

"C" on your agenda, again, on the first page, this is the Opencut Mining Act by Goran, gravel pit. And on your agenda it says that I asked for a status update on November 6th. They just got back to me this week, so I apologize that the most recent information is not on the agenda.

But they've exchanged settlement agreements, and they're just finalizing language. They let me know in that status update. So I'll expect that one to settle relatively quickly.

"D," Oil Field Rock and Logistics on your agenda, going on to Page 2, we have a scheduling order on their briefing motions for summary judgment, so we'll see how that goes, and it is moving along at a good page.

"E," the Dickenson's appeal, you can see on your agenda that we've issued an order, a scheduling order, but then we had a motion to stay. I granted that for 60 days. Essentially I'm guessing -- although I don't know -- that they're talking to each other to see about settlement. So I will get an update within 60 days, and I'll follow up with that at your next meeting.

"F," Opencut Mining by Wagoner Family, I have issued an order on summary judgment, so they will have an opportunity to make exceptions before the Board, and oral argument at the next meeting if they want it, and that part of that may be in front of you for a decision at the next Board meeting.

Going on to the nonenforcement cases,

2(a) Phillips 66, this was dismissed, so just an

FYI for you guys that this will fall off of your

agenda, and you won't see it anymore.

"B," under 2(b), LT Trucking, again, this was dismissed, just an FYI for you it will come off of your agenda at the next meeting.

Westmoreland Resources, there is a stay for thirty days, and I should probably let DEQ

update on that one.

CHAIR DEVENY: John North, could you give us an update on that. Thank you.

MR. NORTH: Yes, Madam Chair. John
North, Chief Legal Counsel. There is no change in
that status. They're still working on settling
the attorneys fees issue.

MS. CLERGET: So moving on to "D," under No. 2, Signal Peak, again, I apologize. When I put out the agenda, you saw that I asked for an update, which came in this week. The update stated that they're working on discovery issues, and they proposed a schedule for motions. So I anticipate that we'll get another scheduling order in place relatively quickly, but it's moving along at a good pace.

"E," Western Energy, we had a scheduling conference this week. So again, this is an update even from what's on your agenda. And we're going to have another scheduling conference next week. Essentially we're working through discovery issues, and I think the parties are working hard to get a schedule in place. There is a lot of moving parts in that case. So I'm on top of it, but we're going to have to have another scheduling

conference next week before we have any firm schedule in place.

"F," moving on to Page 3 of your agenda, Montanore Minerals case, there is a scheduling order in place, and we're proceeding through that scheduling order. It is a relatively new scheduling order, so they're in discovery right now.

"G," Glacier Ranch, the parties filed a stipulation to dismiss, so this is another just FYI that this is going to drop off of your agenda and go away. It is closed.

"H," Northwest Company's appeal of -- I can't pronounce their name. I apologize. But we call it Northwest. So this is just a dismissal, FYI for you guys, that it is going to come off of your agenda.

"I" on Page 3 of your agenda, the Laurel Refinery, we have stayed this until February 16th. So they are in discussions amongst themselves right now, and I will get back to you at the next meeting after that February 16th deadline.

Actually it will probably be the third meeting once that February 16th deadline passes.

"J" on your agenda, this is Payne

Logging. This was scheduled to be an oral argument at this meeting because it is fully -- it is done and ready for the Council, but the parties asked that it be moved to the next meeting, so at the next meeting, you'll have a proposed order from -- actually Hearing Examiner Haladay, exceptions from the parties, and then the Board will hear oral arguments, and you'll be deciding on that case at the next meeting.

And now the third point under the contested case updates, this is a contested case not assigned to a Hearing Examiner. This is a new -- I apologize.

CHAIR DEVENY: I think this is DEO's.

MS. CLERGET: Yes, this is DEQ's.

CHAIR DEVENY: Before you proceed, John, does anybody have questions of Sarah? We want to keep her talking as long as possible. Do any of the Board members have questions for Sarah on any of the contested case updates that she just gave?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, we'll go ahead and proceed with John North and the contested case not assigned to a Hearings Examiner.

MR. NORTH: Madam Chair, I have to apologize to you and the Board. The response I gave previously was with regard to this particular matter. The status hasn't changed on this one. It's still in front of the Court for determination of attorneys fees, before a notice of appeal could be filed with the Supreme Court.

With regard to the previous one, which I think was 2(c), we feel reluctant to comment on that because Counsel, other Counsel for the other parties isn't here. So we would decline to do that, with the Hearing Officer's permission.

MS. CLERGET: I guess the point is it is not in front of the Board. It is in front of the Supreme Court, is the update.

CHAIR DEVENY: John, while you're there,

I think you reported on this one last week that

you thought it was going to be done by this

meeting.

MR. NORTH: Right.

CHAIR DEVENY: Is there a particular reason for the delay that we should know about, or is it just the way things go?

MR. NORTH: It is just the way negotiations go. They didn't go quite as smoothly

as I anticipated, but they're still ongoing.

CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. Thank you. Any other questions of John on that particular case from Board members?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, we'll proceed. Thank you, Sarah and John.

Time to move on to our action items, which the first issue will be the initiation of rulemaking, and I would like to turn that over to DEQ.

MR. MATHIEUS: Madam Chair, I believe Myla Kelly is presenting to the Board this morning.

CHAIR DEVENY: Can everybody see the power point? Board members, you should have the power point in front of you that Myla Kelly is going to give. Okay. Go ahead.

MS. KELLY: Okay. Great. Good morning, Madam Chair, members of the Board. My name is Myla Kelly. I'm the section supervisor for the Water Quality Standards and Modeling Section in the Water Quality Division here in Montana DEQ.

We're here today to request initiation of rulemaking to implement MCA 75-5-222 Sub (2).

This is a statute that states that if pollution upstream of a discharger is due to anthropogenic or human caused sources, a variance from the water quality standards may be appropriate under certain conditions. So today I'd like to brief you on the components of this proposed rule, and address any questions that you might have.

This product has been achieved through a substantial public stakeholder work group process. This is through our Senate Bill 325 Work Group. This work group began our monthly meetings in January of 2016. And the work group is comprised of representatives of Montana from agriculture, industry, local government, and environmental constituents.

Throughout the development of this proposed rule, in addition to working with our stakeholder work group, we've worked hand in hand with the US EPA to address ideas, concerns, or requests along the way to ensure that we met all components of the Federal Clean Water Act.

This proposed rule has had multiple reviews by the work group itself, by EPA, by our DEQ Legal Division, and our Water Pollution Control Advisory Council, who proposed moving this

forward to the Board today.

In March of 2017, we presented a rule package to the Board of Environmental Review.

Based on the feedback that we got from the Board and from some public comments, we met again an additional six times, made some changes, and now we're again coming before the Board to request initiation of the rulemaking.

So our Bureau Chief, if you remember last Board meeting, Eric Urban introduced this topic in conjunction with an overview of water quality standards. So as you may recall, Senate Bill 325 was codified as MCA 75-5-222, and it contains two provisions.

The first provision of the statute states that DEQ may not apply water quality standards to a water body that is more stringent than a nonanthropogenic condition of the water body.

The second provision is actually a directive to the Department to adopt rules that if the pollution upstream of a discharger is due to anthropogenic or, again, human sources, a variance from the standards may be appropriate under certain conditions.

Long term historic mining sources such as those that might result from historic mining in the watershed; those that may eventually be remediated, but have not been remediated yet, are the primary type of pollution that the second part

of this bill is seeking to address.

So an example of the application of this type of variance is a community grappling with water quality issues from a legacy pollutant source upstream.

Again, note today that we're requesting initiation of rulemaking for the second part of this bill, and not the first. So I wanted to step back just a second.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The following participant has entered the conference. No names are available.

CHAIR DEVENY: Excuse me. Could the person who just entered the meeting please identify themselves.

MR. WARNER: Tim Warner. I was cut off.

CHAIR DEVENY: Oh, okay. Thanks, Tim.

Go ahead.

MS. KELLY: So just to step back a moment and explain to you exactly what a variance

is, since we've used that term multiple times. A variance is a State and a Clean Water Act tool that's appropriate to use when a couple of conditions are met.

One of those is that the water quality standards in the water body is accurate, so that the water quality standards that we want to maintain in that water body.

And the second is that there is flexibility that's needed for a permittee to actually meet that water quality standards due to specific factors that are spelled out in State and Federal regulations.

So the flexibility has to be due to these defined factors, and these include naturally occurring pollutant concentrations, dams or hydrologic modifications, natural flow conditions, natural physical conditions. There is a number of these factors that are spelled out in Federal regulations. There's actually seven of them.

And what does a variance do? It allows a discharger to continue their current performance, which again they're applying for a variance, so this typically means that their current performance is exceeding water quality

standards. But it allows them to continue that current performance for a limited amount of time.

So as we discuss the components of this proposed rule, it is important to keep in mind that this rule that I'm going to talk about is the process, describes the process for how an applicant would apply for a variance under the conditions in the statute and proposed rule.

So this is not a general variance. Each applicant seeking a variance under this rulemaking will have to request an individual variance, which involves a public review process, and requires approval both by the Department and by EPA.

So in summary, the new rule sets forth the conditions under which an applicant may apply for a variance, and it specifies that the applicant cannot materially contribute to the condition of the receiving water body.

It also describes how the highest attainable condition of the water body must be met under the variance, and it outlines requirements for DEQ approval and for periodic review of the variance.

So hopefully you have had an opportunity to look at the rule, so I want to just more

specifically go through each component. Sub (1) of the rule aligns the rule language with the statute itself.

Sub(2) of the rule sets forth the requirements for the permittee to apply for a variance, and aligns that rule language with Federal regulations, requiring that the variance issued represent the highest attainable condition or the best that can be done for that water body that's reasonably achievable.

Sub (3) and (4) set forth requirements for the Department's review of the application for the variance, including a requirement to consult with the applicant if the Department determines that a reasonable alternative exists that would eliminate the need for a variance. So this could include a compliance schedule; this could include a TMDL process. So if there is an alternative, we need to address that.

Sub(5) and (6) further describes the Department's variance review, the public review process, and the requirement to submit the variance to EPA for review.

Sub(7) provides for using the variance to develop MPDES permit limits. And Sub(8) and

(9) require a five year review period to reevaluate the need of this variance, and sets forth a process for that five year review, and again, allows for public comment and EPA review.

So I'd now like to walk you -- that's the rule language, and now I'd like to walk you through the process that the Department would go through for determining whether the applicant is eligible for a variance. So these are a series of questions that we'll need to consider for each variance application.

Step 1 is the question of whether -- is the condition of the receiving water body likely to be remediated in the next five years, and if the answer is yes, then a variance is not appropriate under this process. If the remediation is not likely to occur in the next five years, then we move on to Step 2.

And Step 2 asks the question, "Can the water quality standard be achieved through a permit related action?" For example, like I was saying before, this could be a compliance schedule or a TMDL that states that the discharge is not a significant contributor to the water quality problem.

But again, we ask that question, and if the answer is yes, this doesn't necessarily preclude the applicant from seeking a variance, but it informs the applicant that there may be an alternative path forward.

If there are no other permit related actions, then we move on to Step 3 and we ask the question: Are the water quality standards unattainable because the Applicant has demonstrated one of the seven factors in EPA's Federal requirements for variances?

There are seven options, as I previously mentioned, to justify not meeting a water quality standard under Federal regulations.

We think that two of those factors are most relevant to this rulemaking. Those factors are that human caused pollution prevents the attainment of the use, and the source cannot be remediated or would cause more environmental damage to correct than leave in place. We think that is a potential factor for an applicant to apply for a variance.

Another potential factor is that meeting a water quality standard would cause substantial and widespread economic harm. For this second

factor, DEQ has developed extensive and detailed guidance on how to carry out a substantial and widespread harm analysis for a permit applicant in both the private and public sector. So meeting one of these factors is a Federal requirement, as well as a State statute requirement.

So finally, if the answer -- So we're on Point 4 there. If the answer is yes, we move to the final question, and that is Step 4: Will the discharge materially contribute to the condition of the water body?

So what does this mean? Each situation will be different, so the exact method by which we, Department of Environmental Quality, determine whether material contribution to the condition of the water body is going to be situational, so we have a couple foundational points from the Department's material contribution review.

And those foundational points are, number one, that the Department really does need to determine this on a case-by-case basis, because site specific conditions, such as the hardness, the pH, other water quality factors, really need to be evaluated on a site specific basis.

And secondly, the rule language in

Federal regulations require that the discharger meet the highest attainable interim standard, so the best that can be reasonably achieved. So those will be our foundational principles under that material contribution review.

Again, so now we're coming up on our final step here. If the answer is no, the applicant is moved -- no as in not materially contributing -- the applicant is moved through the variance process, and the applicant may apply for a variance.

So from this point on, if DEQ determines that the variance application meets all of Montana's rules, we will begin the public process, which allows time for public comment on the individual variance itself, and a public hearing to ensure that we have all the information that we need. The Department then responds to those comments, and the last step in the process is EPA review and approval.

So in conclusion, while the effort of this rulemaking has been substantial, it is important to know that we anticipate the actual application of this variance process to be fairly minimal. Frankly there is very few scenarios in

1 Montana that will meet all of the conditions that

2 we just went through in that flow chart.

So I'm pleased to present this rule package to the Board. It represents a really massive commitment of thought, work, and time on the part of our staff, on the part of our work group members, as well as our EPA reviewers.

And also it represents a two year process during which we solicited continual feedback from our work group members, and responded to that feedback within the bounds of the directive language of the statute itself, and then meeting all aspects of the Clean Water Act.

With that, I'd just like to see if we can respond to any questions.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Myla. Do

Board members have questions of Myla at this

point? There will be some time for public comment

on this, but I want to see if Board members have

specific questions right now, and we'll also have

time for questions later. Any questions right

now?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, I guess we will open this up for public comment on the rules,

and I guess there is quite a few folks here today.

Just for sake of timeliness, I'd like to see a show of hands for how many people are planning to comment.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Just one. And do we have some folks by phone that are interested in commenting?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

CHAIR DEVENY: So four people. Okay.

We will entertain comments from the public then,
and I'd like to ask that each of the people don't
go beyond ten minutes, and probably less than that
if you can do that. And let's start with the
gentleman in the room here.

MR. OLSON: Thank you, Madam Chairman, members of the Board. For the record, my name is Alan Olson. I'm the Executive Director of the Montana Petroleum Association.

First off, I would really like to commend DEQ staff and Ms. Kelly for all of the work that they've put into this over the last couple years. It has been a rather long drawn out

process, and your staff has done a very fine job.

Madam Chairman, members of the Board, looking, going back to the spirit of the discussion on Senate Bill 325 -- and I apologize for not bringing this forward to the staff before today.

But New Rule I Subsection (1) currently states, "The Department may grant to a permittee a variance for a water quality standard if the Department determines in writing," then the following criteria. That seems to conflict a little bit with Subsection (5) of the proposed rule where it says, "The Department shall grant."

We would like to suggest that maybe we have a new Section 1 that states, "The Department shall approve a variance if the following conditions are met," and then get down into the meat of the rule with the conditions, and renumbering the sections following that.

We feel that if a permittee can meet all of the conditions stated in the proposed rule, that the Department definitely should grant the variance. So with that, Madam Chair, we will be a little more prepared as the rulemaking goes forward with a little more comprehensive written

comments.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Mr. Olson. So we have three people by phone, so I guess we'll just go ahead, and whoever speaks up first will be allowed to testify. So please state your name clearly so that we can get that recorded.

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: So there were some people that wanted to speak, comment on this by phone.

Could you please speak up.

MR. GORDER: Yes. I can go first. This is Andrew Gorder. For the record, my last name is G-O-R-D-E-R. I'm legal director for the Clark Fork Coalition.

CHAIR DEVENY: Go ahead, Mr. Gorder.
Thank you.

MR. GORDER: Thank you, Madam Chair, members of the Board. Just for background, the coalition is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Clark Fork Basin. We have over 3,000 members, including members in the Upper Clark Fork, and we're actively involved in restoration work within the Upper Clark Fork and other areas of the Basin.

So we have a vested interest in

protecting clean, and cold, and abundant water.

Additionally, we have a vested interest in water quality. The owners of senior water rights are dedicated to in-stream flow purposes for the protection of the fishery resources.

With respect to the rulemaking proposed today, while the coalition understands that DEQ is compelled to act by statute, we do have concerns about potential unanticipated implication of the proposed rules with respect to variance standards for water bodies, and facing anthropogenic pollution.

Much of our efforts are focused on legacy pollution sources in the Upper Clark Fork Basin.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The following participant has entered the conference.

MR. FIX: Mark Fix.

MR. GORDER: As we all know, continuing water quality -- (inaudible) -- caused by hundreds of years of mining.

Our basic concern here is that by creating new avenues for dischargers to apply the variances where we're dealing with historic pollution sources that are not able to be

remediated within the next five years, we may be taking away one of the few tools that we have to ratchet down on the pollution, without any guarantee of State or Federal action to address the main causes of the historic pollution. So

that's kind of our big picture concern.

We also have some concerns about the proposed language in Subsection (1)(d), which outlines the factors that would allow for a variance, specifically if the discharge would not, quote, "materially contribute to the existing conditions."

The term "materially contribute" is not found in the Clean Water Act or the Federal regulations related to the Clean Water Act, simply because the Clean Water Act -- (inaudible) -- all pollution, whether material or immaterial.

And while the intention here appears to be clearly not to punish downstream dischargers for upstream problems, it's unclear how exactly the Department will determine what constitutes material contribution to an impaired waterway other than by, I guess, a case-by-case basis.

But for pollution sources, things like dioxin and heavy metals, even small dischargers

can contribute, eventually contribute to an exceedence of water quality standards. So that term "material contribution" is somewhat problematic for us.

So in sum, we do understand that there has been a lot of work into this, and the DEQ and the Legislature would obviously like to see this process move forward as quickly and efficiently as possible, the Coalition does feel there is some remaining work to be done on the proposed rule, and we're happy to work with the Department on these issues. And ultimately should the Board initiate rulemaking, we will submit a further, more detailed comment in writing. So thank you for your time.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Mr. Gorder.

I'd like to ask people who are on the phone if you could mute your phones. We're getting a little bit of feedback in here, and it would be helpful.

So there were two other people that indicated they wanted to speak, and there was one other person that came in recently. Would the person that just called in a couple minutes ago please identify themselves, and indicate if you plan to speak regarding these proposed rules.

MR. FIX: This is Mark Fix, and I was planning on commenting.

CHAIR DEVENY: So we have three more people to comment. I've asked everybody to please limit to no more than ten minutes, and I appreciate that people have held it to less than five. So there is three people who are ready to comment, and the line is open, so whoever gets there first can speak up.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: Madam Chairman, my name is Brenda Lindlief-Hall. I represent the Tongue River Water Users Association.

CHAIR DEVENY: Excuse me, Brenda. Could you please just speak up a little bit, and please clarify your name and spell it for our Court Reporter.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: Yes. First name is Brenda. My last name is Lindlief-Hall, L-I-N-D-L-I-E-F H-A-L-L.

CHAIR DEVENY: We're still not hearing you really clearly, so if there is any way you can get closer to the mike or make it a little clearer, we'd appreciate it. But please go on with your comments, and I'll let you know if we're not getting them.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: So I represent the Tongue River Water Users Association. That's an organization of ranchers and farmers that irrigate with the waters of the Tongue River in southeastern Montana.

I would like to just give a little bit of background into Senate Bill 325. When it was first introduced, it was designed to really facilitate, at least Part 1 of the statute was designed to facilitate permitting of the MPDES permits for the proposed Otter Creek Coal Mine in southeastern Montana. That was because the Department of Environmental Quality couldn't devise a way into a permit to Arch Coal -- (inaudible) --

CHAIR DEVENY: I'm sorry, Brenda. We're having a really hard time hearing you. If there's a problem on your end, and we could maybe hear from somebody else to give you time to do that.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: Sure. Can you hear me now?

CHAIR DEVENY: No.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: I just would like to make a few really brief comments, if you can hear me.

CHAIR DEVENY: Well, let's keep trying then. Thank you.

MS. LINDLIEF-HALL: So I guess with that background, we do have concerns at this point in time with Part 2 of the rule, because it doesn't -- it is not narrowly tailored to address the legacy pollutants that Ms. Kelly referenced.

Additionally, as Mr. Gorder stated, we have problems with the term "material contribution." It is very vague, it is not defined. And then there is no definition for "reasonable alternative" in Subsection (5). And so we do believe that there needs to be a little more work done on this rule.

Additionally, we would oppose anything that makes it mandatory upon the Department of Environmental Quality to issue a variance. This rule needs to be very narrowly tailored to ensure that we're not contributing to a problem that is already not being addressed.

So with that, I will close. I thank you for the opportunity to comment, and I apologize for the bad connection.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Brenda. I appreciate it. We should have two more people

that are ready to speak up.

MR. ALSENTZER: Yes, Madam Chair,

Members of the Board, my name is Guy Alsentzer,

last name spelled A-L-S-E-N-T-Z-E-R. I am staff

attorney for Upper Missouri Waterkeeper on whose

behalf I'm presenting comments today. And like

Mr. Gorder for the Clark Fork Coalition and the

Tongue River Water Users Association, we oppose

the current draft of DEQ's rule.

As some of you may be aware, my organization is a Montana grassroots based conservation organization, specifically focused on protecting and improving water quality throughout the upper Missouri River Basin, which is a broad expanse of 25,000 square miles where we have not only the headwaters of one of the key river systems in Montana, but where we have innumerable businesses, families, and where people work, live, and play, and rely on maintaining readily available waters. We focus explicitly on the responsible -- (inaudible) -- law for water resources management and --

CHAIR DEVENY: I'm sorry, Mr. Alsentzer.

We're having a hard time understanding you because

of some feedback that we're getting. Could you go

back maybe just about maybe half a minute ago where you talked about the Missouri Water Users.

MR. ALSENTZER: Absolutely. And if it would behoove us, I'm happy to call back in and see if it is simply a bad connection.

CHAIR DEVENY: Let's try to keep going.

I think we got you early on, and then things just kind of started interrupting. Why don't you continue.

MR. ALSENTZER: Thank you, Madam Chair. We focus explicitly on how DEQ implements the requirements of Federal law as well as our State constitutional protections, and it is on that basis and with this focus that we're approaching and opposed to DEQ's variance rule today.

We think, as was explained previously, that the rule that we're seeing today is overbroad in its design, and because its guidance is notably vague on key implementation issues. And in particular I want to highlight a couple different sections of the rule, and why they don't comply with Federal law, and why also they should be sent back for more work.

As I'm sure the Board is aware, the primary emphasis behind SB 325's concern was

severe economic burdens for the small communities as a result of imposing new water pollution control measures, but what we see in the rule's plain language today does not squarely address municipal pollution controls, but instead the proposed rule represents an overbroad new regulatory mechanism that would allow far more

than just a deserving small community the ability

to gradually work on their pollution controls.

Rather the plain language would allow nearly any type of discharger downstream from historic pollution to come into a brand new permit scheme where they have to do far less to control their own local pollution. That itself on its face is not what the purpose of Montana's SB 325 was about, and on that very 30,000 foot level, we're very concerned with application of the rules.

Second, and of equal concern to my organization, where we focus on lawful implementation of the Federal Clean Water Act is how you're looking at the proposed rule when it actually gets applied. As I'm sure most of the Board is aware, based on Ms. Kelly's discussion of what is a variance earlier today, the rule has to

satisfy certain requirements for variances.

We have three particularly troubling language instances under the proposed rule where we think it doesn't comply with Federal requirements, and are a clear basis for the Board denying DEQ's request for rulemaking today.

The significance criterion and the novel materiality determinations are specific issues that don't exist underneath Federal mandatory language for variances. The plain language of DEQ's draft rule states that a variance can be appropriate if upstream man-made pollution exists that is more significant than the discharger's, and the discharger's pollution contribution would not materially contribute to waterway impairment.

The key thing to pick out here is neither significance nor materiality are allowed under corresponding Federal rules. The significance determinations are really troublesome for my organization because of the nature of the pollutants that are actually challenging our waterways.

Think of it from the context of a bioaccumulative pollutant like a nutrient or a metal, not to mention the idea of toxics, a

volatile organic chemical. How about temperature and salinity? Even in non-material contributions, these pollutants can, when they are discharged to local waterways, cause or contribute to the local exceedence of water quality standards.

The point being is that new ground is being lost as we talk about these determinations. And while we have DEQ admitting that there needs to be a judicious case-by-case analysis for application of the rule, the plain language that's being proposed allows the type of materiality and significance determinations, and that those determinations are not found underneath the Federal law which the State of Montana is bound to follow.

And likewise it undermines this system of pollution control that we have under both State and Federal law where we know that all pollution, whether it is material or non-material, must be controlled. Otherwise, if we don't control site specific pollution of all types, we risk creating pollution hot spot issues, where we really risk and undermine local waterways and local water segments, but still see on the whole that a waterway may be in compliance with the waterway

protection rules.

One of the key components of the draft rule that I really want to point out and highlight here as incompatible is the idea of the five year permit term, that the rule that we see today talks about pollution in the context of if we can't deal with an upstream historic pollution source that's about in a term of five years, which is to say a normal discharger permit term, then this is the first way that we're allowed to say, "It is all right. We're going to grant a less stringent limit to a downstream discharger," and that the basis for that is allegedly found underneath the Clean Water Act.

And if folks would take a look at the actual regulations under 40 CFR 131.10(g), the actual language of Federal rules doesn't qualify about remediation in terms of a five year permit term. It actually says it cannot be remediated, which is implicitly talking about a permanent issue, in which case at that point in time it makes logical sense, as well as scientific sense, that there is no rationale afforded a very strong permit term for a downstream discharger if you can't remediate a pollution that's permanent

upstream. But what we're trying to --

CHAIR DEVENY: Excuse me, Guy. Could you wrap this up in about less than a minute, because I've kind of limited comments to other people, and I need to hold you to the same.

MR. ALSENTZER: Yes, Madam Chair. So in conclusion, the five year permit terms, the overbroad nature of the rule, and the basic context that material contribution is not part of our Federal rules, these are all glaring deficiencies that don't comply with Federal law.

We're very concerned about moving forward on a course where DEQ starts the rulemaking on that, and then we end up having to litigate the judicious nature of this in the Court system. We think a much better solution would be to go back, to discuss these legal flaws with DEQ, and to come up with a rule that does comply with rules that does protect Montana's water community.

For this reason, we would hope that the Board today would deny DEQ's request for rulemaking, and let us go back and tweak it so that we can make sure it complies with Federal protections.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you for your

comments, Guy. I appreciate it. And there is one more person, Mark Fix, that wanted to comment this morning.

MR. FIX: To just let you know, Madam Chair, members of the Board, my name is Mark Fix. If you can't hear me too well, I have provided email copies of my testimony, so you've got it in front of you. If you can't hear me very well, we can just -- I can just stay on and take questions if you can't hear me.

CHAIR DEVENY: I think we're hearing you pretty good right now, so go ahead.

MR. FIX: Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment on DEQ's proposed rulemaking for Part 2 of Section 1 of Senate Bill 325 passed by the Legislature in 2015.

I live, ranch, and irrigate along the Tongue River outside of Miles City. I'm testifying today on behalf of myself, and also on behalf of Northern Plains Resource Council, of which I am a member. For those of you who aren't familiar with Northern Plains, our organization is a grassroots conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montana citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and

unique quality of life.

Northern Plains has members through the state and from all walks of life, many of whom historically and at present are agricultural water users, particularly in southeast Montana. It is from that perspective that we have some questions and concerns about the proposal that DEQ is bringing before you today.

To be clear, we appreciate the legislative intent of the various portions of Senate Bill 325. We fully appreciate that there are smaller municipalities in Montana without the budgetary means to immediately deal with legacy mine pollution issues.

Having participated in the 2015

legislative hearings on the bill, we remember and understand the discussion about Butte and its legacy mine pollution in particular. The legislative intent with variances under Senate Bill 325 was about municipalities, and we worry therefore that what DEQ presents here today paints the idea of variances with too broad a brush.

The general history and intent behind

State and Federal water policy, particularly as
relates to the Clean Water Act, have been around

holistic management and protection of waterways and watersheds, with the understanding that water is our most precious resource. Without clean water, we have very little.

We therefore believe that protection of water quality is a high purpose, and variances should be limited in scope, and generally tools of last resort. We worry that this process may be overbroad or too broadly applicable, where more limited case by case actions for a more limited scope of actors is more appropriate.

We would flag a few other things in this proposal as well. We worry about the wiggle room that appears to be in the language around the idea of material contributions to water quality degradation and about DEQ's -- (inaudible) --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: The following participant has entered the conference.

CHAIR DEVENY: Excuse me, Mr. Fix. We had somebody come in. Could that person please identify themselves.

MR. JOHNSON: Yes. This is Derf Johnson with the Montana Environmental Information Center.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Mr. Johnson.

Do you plan to provide comment on the proposed

rules today?

MR. JOHNSON: Potentially.

CHAIR DEVENY: Please continue, Mr. Fix. Sorry for the interruption.

MR. FIX: Sure. Material contributions to water quality degradation, about DEQ's ability to interpret what constitutes a material contribution on a case-by-case basis.

While a particular point source discharge may not ultimately have a significant impact on the water quality of a river more broadly, we are concerned about the impacts to an irrigator or other water users immediately downstream of that discharge. These designated uses need to be protected. The water may only be suitable for irrigation at certain times of the year when it is at its best quality. These limited uses must be protected.

By allowing discharges, these small windows of irrigation timing could be closed.

Granting a variance for a year around discharge may not protect the beneficial uses to irrigation.

In addition, the cumulative effects any variance has on downstream users may also be affected.

We particularly worry about this within

the context of parameters like salinity. Salts can quickly become toxic to crops and soil. In DEQ's draft guidance document, the agency states that it may be more stringent with carcinogens versus toxics versus harmful parameters. This language is found under the material contribution section on Page 7.

While EC, electric conductivity, and SAR, sodium adsorption ratio, are not -(inaudible) -- their effects can be significant, harmful, and in some cases devastating. During the height of the coal bed methane boom, some Tongue River area ranchers saw their crop yields drop by as much as 40 percent due to salt accumulation.

We therefore worry that if the agency views harmful parameters like salt in a less stringent manner, it may view their contributions as less material to the water quality, and therefore permit variances that result in harm to farmers and ranchers.

We also worry to some degree about the piecemeal creation of rules under Senate Bill 325 and the uncertainty that this process creates. A degraded baseline is not in and of itself an

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excuse to allow further degradation. Although
some exceptions may indeed be needed, they should
be limited in scope.

Consequently, we believe that the rule as presented may not be ready for prime time.

Thus we are asking you to refer the rule on variance back to DEQ for further work. Thank you for your attention to our concerns, and for the opportunity to testify here today.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Mr. Fix.

Those were all the people who indicated they were planning to speak on the proposed rules. I'm going to have one more opportunity for people from the public to speak. Is there anybody else either on the phone or in the room that wanted to speak?

CHAIR DEVENY: If not, we will have some Board discussion on this.

(No response)

It appears that there is quite a lot of disagreement on whether these rules are ready to move forward. And I know these rules were proposed to the previous Board some time back, in February or March, I believe, and the rules were sent back to DEQ with instructions to go back to the work group, and try to work through concerns

that they had.

I guess I'd like DEQ to explain to the Board why we're hearing a lot of continual disagreement with what's going on, and if it doesn't seem like there is still opportunity for the DEQ to go back and work with these folks to come up with something that people are going to be a little more agreeable on.

George, would you want to comment on that at all?

MR. MATHIEUS: Madam Chair, I could comment on that, and I may seek a little help from the program.

Just generally speaking, the Department values the public process. I think years ago -- I think that's evident in the fact that years ago we developed kind of this informal work group process or concept by which we could develop rulemaking. We find that that adds much more value to the process, and so that's how we've pretty much been operating as a Department for at least the last ten years, if not longer.

I think that helps us understand the issues from all sides, it helps us develop rules that are implementable, and it better aids with

the overall development.

I would say in this case that -- and being involved in some of these personally myself -- it has been exhaustive. I think initiation of rulemaking is just another step towards now a more formal process by which we would still take public comment, we would still make changes as appropriate.

And I guess from that perspective, we still believe moving forward with the initiation of rulemaking is appropriate, it is timely. This came out of legislation from 2015. And we've heard the concerns today.

I think we would offer that as we move forward, that we'll address those concerns to the best of our capability within the construct of the statute and Federal, which I think Myla indicated clearly. We've been hand in hand with EPA on this every step of the way on how to develop these rules to meet Federal regulations.

So with that, the Department would still respectfully request that the Board initiate rulemaking. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Do Board members have any comments or questions on this? I think we should

1 have a discussion.

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton. I have a question.

CHAIR DEVENY: Please go ahead, John.

MR. FELTON: There seems to have been a fair amount of discussion about the terminology in the proposed rule, the material contribution aspect. I'm wondering if we could hear from the legal side from the Department, if that terminology is intended legally, or if it's concern rate that it is not -- it doesn't exist outside of this rule is a legitimate legal concern that we should worry about.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, John. Is somebody from DEQ able to speak to that? John North. Thank you, John.

MR. NORTH: Madam Chair, Mr. Felton.

The statute 75-5-222, which is the one that is being implemented here, would be implemented by the rules, provides that the Board shall adopt rules consistent with comparable Federal rules and guidelines, providing procedures and criteria for the Department to issue variances from standards if, and then it has two conditions:

One, if the condition cannot reasonably

be remediated during the permit term for which the application for variance has been received, so that's the five year provision; and then the second condition is if the discharge to which the variance applied would not materially contribute to the condition. So that is a statutory provision for the variance.

CHAIR DEVENY: John Felton, did you have any follow-up?

MR. FELTON: Yes. I understand on the State statute, some of the commenters seemed to indicate that that may be a new concept which affects the Federal. Is that true, or is that -- I'm not a lawyer, so which sort of governs that, if that really if something new contribute compared to the Federal? I guess my question is: Does it create a problem, or does this statutory authorization at the State level provide us that need to address that?

MR. NORTH: Madam Chair, Mr. Felton, this is a State statute which governs this rulemaking, and therefore the requirements of the statute which the Board are bound by provide that as a criterion.

MR. FELTON: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Other comments or
questions that other Board members might have?

MR. DEARMENT: Madam Chair, this is John

Dearment.

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CHAIR DEVENY: Yes. John Dearment. Go ahead.

MR. DEARMENT: I'm wondering if all of the groups that spoke both for and against rulemaking today were represented on the 325 rulemaking group. This draft rule has been sent back to them once already. Clearly there is some tough disagreement here. I wondering from a procedural -- (inaudible) -- does it make sense to send it back a second time. Is there any hope of members resolving the differences within that group, or with initiating the rulemaking and beginning a formal comment period a better way to go, ultimately resolving it and moving this thing I'm not sure -- (inaudible) -- but kind of where I am, and I'm wondering what some other Board members might think about that, or if we could get it right from the Board attorney.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, John. Could DEQ respond to that. Were all these other people who spoke members of the work group? And while

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you're at it, could you, particularly since the
time that the Board remanded the rule back to

staff, talk about those meetings.

MS. KELLY: Sure. Madam Chair, members of the Board. I can't remember who asked the question. Sorry.

CHAIR DEVENY: John Dearment. And identify yourself for the folks --

MS. KELLY: I'm Myla Kelly with the
Water Quality Standards Program, and just a couple
comments. Yes, all of the groups who spoke today
are a part of the work group, members of their
constituencies are part of the work group. And
I'd just like to make a couple comments on that.

One comment is with regards to the material contribution questions. I just want to make it really clear that the material contribution is an additional stringency that the State statute is providing. So all Clean Water Act Federal requirements will be met, and we're required to meet those through the variance process.

The material contribution is an "and," so all of the Federal requirements will be met, and there cannot be a material contribution. So

it is really an additional stringency that has been added on the part of our State through the State statute process to ensure that we're meeting the Federal regulations, plus going beyond that and ensuring that we don't even have material contribution.

So I wanted to make that clarification.

And also through -- since we went back to work through this, some of the concerns that came around last time. I think we met an additional six times, and then we did ask for informal comments from the members of the work group on Part 2. We received those comments in writing, and then addressed those comments in a subsequent work group meeting.

Many of the comments, some of which we've heard today with concerns of meeting the Clean Water Act, we did not make any additional changes to the rule language. We received -- and that was because we and EPA believed that all of the Clean Water Act requirements were being met in this rule.

So we had some written responses, both from EPA to address those concerns. So while we didn't make any changes based on that, it was only

because we were confident that they were addressed.

CHAIR DEVENY: So the rule that is before us today is exactly the same as it was when it was presented to the Board back in February or March?

MS. KELLY: No. We made some changes to the process, but those changes were again presented to the work group about six months ago, and then we requested feedback from the work group on all of those potential changes, and addressed those within the work group context.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Myla.

Do Board members have any other comments or questions?

MR. BUSBY: This is Dexter Busby. This is a statutory requirement by the Legislature, and I think the Department has done at least a credible job of trying to address the statutory language, and I think we should move forward with rulemaking, and I am prepared to make a motion to that effect.

CHAIR DEVENY: Are you making a motion, Dexter?

25 MR. BUSBY: Yes. I move that we move

toward with the rulemaking. All the comments that have been made can be addressed during the public comment period of the rulemaking.

CHAIR DEVENY: There has been a motion to initiate rulemaking to implementation MCA 75-5-222, the rules for that. Is there a second to the motion?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: I don't hear a second.

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton. I'l.

second that motion.

CHAIR DEVENY: There has been a second to the motion by John Felton. Is there discussion on the motion by Board members?

MR. BUSBY: This is Dexter again. I think as a Board, if we don't move forward at this point, we're kind of sticking a finger in the eye of the Legislature, and I don't think that's appropriate.

MR. DEARMENT: Madam Chair, this is John Dearment. I guess following up on Ms. Kelly's comment, it sounds to me like the work group and DEQ have already heard most of the objections we've heard today, and tried to deal with them over the course of the last six months. I'm not

sure I see the value of sending it back again beyond additional time.

I'm still wondering if maybe the best way to move forward is to initiate rulemaking, and then try to resolve these disagreements in the rulemaking process, and ultimately at the end of that, the Board get a chance to either adopt, reject, or send it back to the drawing board through that more formal process, so I guess I'm leaning that way myself.

CHAIR DEVENY: Other comments, other discussion on the motion before the Board?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, we'll have a vote. All those in favor say aye.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Motion passes. DEQ,
you're to move ahead with initiating the
rulemaking on this. Thank you everybody who
participated, and made comments, and attended the
meeting today with regards to this issue. And I
know there is going to be opportunity as the rule
proceeds for people to continue to have input on

58 1 this. Thank you very much. 2 George, would you just tell me. There's 3 a procedural thing here, as the new Chair, I'm not too familiar with. 4 5 MR. MATHIEUS: No problem. The Board 6 will need to appoint a Hearing Officer for the 7 rulemaking. CHAIR DEVENY: The Board needs to 8 appoint a Hearing Officer on this rulemaking, and 9 10 since we have Sarah, I would suggest that the 11 Board appoint Sarah as Hearing Officer for this 12 rulemaking. Any discussion on that from the 13 Board? Are you okay with that? I guess we need a motion. I'll make the 14 15 motion that we appoint Sarah Clerget as our 16 Hearing Officer for the purpose of those rules. 17 Could I have a second. 18 MS. HANSON: This is Hillary. I second 19 it. 20 CHAIR DEVENY: It's been moved and 21 seconded. Is there discussion on the motion?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, all in favor, please signify by saying aye.

(Response)

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1 CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed? 2 (No response) CHAIR DEVENY: Motion passes. 3 Sarah, 4 you've got another job. Let's take a five minute break, and then we will come back and finish the 5 6 meeting. 7 (Recess taken) CHAIR DEVENY: Before we get started, 8 Lindsay, could you just check that the Board 9 10 members are back, and find out if there is anybody 11 else on the line. 12 MS. FORD: Welcome back. Just make sure 13 we're all here. Chris Deveny. CHAIR DEVENY: Yes. 14 15 MS. FORD: John Felton. 16 MR. FELTON: Here. 17 MS. FORD: Dexter Busby. 18 MR. BUSBY: I'm here. 19 MS. FORD: Hillary Hanson. 20 MS. HANSON: Here. MS. FORD: Tim Warner. 21 22 MR. WARNER: Here. 23 MS. FORD: John Dearment. 24 MR. DEARMENT: Here. 25 MS. FORD: Chris Tweeten.

1 (No response)

MS. FORD: Is there anyone else still on the line?

(No response)

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: So just Board members are present? Is somebody trying to speak?

CHAIR DEVENY: It's just feedback.

Okay. So we've got a new contested case to talk about, or to have information presented by Sarah Clerget.

MS. CLERGET: This is Item No. III-B on your agenda Page 4, and new contested case B(1) that needs to -- you guys need to decide what you want to do with this. The material on it is in your packet. You have the memo and the appeal paperwork in your packet.

And again, I'll just remind you of your options. You can choose to keep this contested case in front of you, both for procedural and substantive matters; you can choose to assign to a Hearing Examiner for procedural matters only, and keep the substantive decisions for yourself; you can decide to assign it to a Hearing Examiner for all purposes including the final hearing if one

occurs, and then the Hearing Examiner proposes a final decision to the Board, and then you decide on that final decision, or proposed decision.

So those are your three options. And again, you can choose to assign me as the Hearing Examiner if you want to use the Hearing Examiner, or you can choose another Hearing Examiner. So if anybody has any questions, I'm happy to answer them, but this is essentially just a case to be assigned under one of those options.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Sarah. I'm leaning toward just assigning it to Sarah for all purposes at this point. Do Board members have any discussion about that?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: No discussion, I'll make that a motion then that we assign the JR Civil, LLC, Bozeman, Gallatin County, Montana contested case to Sarah Clerget as Hearings Officer for all purposes. Could I get a second?

MR. FELTON: I'll second it. This is John Felton.

CHAIR DEVENY: John Felton seconded it.

Thank you. It's been moved and seconded. All in favor, please say aye.

(Response)

2 CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?

3 (No response)

4 CHAIR DEVENY: Motion passes.

MS. CLERGET: So the second issue, or I guess actually third is Item III-C on your agendas, Page 4. Some action is needed on the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company case, and before we begin the discussion, I want to make it clear which Board members will be taking action on this.

John Dearment, I understand that you might have had some personal involvement in this case, and I wanted to know if you would be recusing yourself from this decision.

MR. DEARMENT: Madam Chair, Ms. Clerget,

I think that's probably wise, yes.

MS. CLERGET: So my understanding is that John Dearment will recuse himself from any action on this case.

Moving forward with the remaining Board members, there is a small summary on your agenda. There is also in your packet a proposed order from me which includes about ten pages. This was also sent to the parties before this hearing. I hope that you've all had a chance to review that order.

It lays out both the procedural matters that have occurred on this case since you assigned it to me for procedural matters at the last Board meeting.

As you may remember, this has been an outstanding issue. The previous to the previous Hearing Examiner, Mr. Reed, indicated to the parties at the end of a hearing in November of 2016 that he would be issuing a proposed decision to the Board, and he then left State employment and left the country, did not provide that proposed decision to the Board.

Then the next Hearings Examiner who came on, Andres Haladay, had some discussion with the Board about this issue, the prior Board, and at the last Board meeting you as the Board asked me to hold a status conference with the parties to discuss the options. And as you can tell from my order, I have now done that several times. We've had three status conferences since the last Board meeting, and those have had varying rates of success.

At the conclusion of those three status conferences, and I issued orders after each of them. The parties, some of the parties made filings in between each of those.

The conclusion of all of them is found in my proposed order. I would turn your attention especially to the last page where I lay out my suggestion for you four items that I believe should occur in this case based on those status conferences and the procedural posture of this case.

First, I recommend to the Board that you find Mr. Reed unavailable as a Hearing Examiner pursuant to Montana Code Annotated 2-4-22.

Second, I suggest that the Board order a new hearing be conducted in this case.

Third, you need to decide how you want to assign this case, if at all, to a Hearing Examiner, whether you want to retain it for final decision and hear the case yourself, or whether you want to assign it to me to conduct the hearing and then give you a proposed order. And if you do -- I should say not necessarily to me -- to a Hearing Examiner, then you need to decide whether you wanted to use me, or whether you would like to use a different Hearing Examiner.

And fourth, you need to address the disclosure of the DEQ's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law, which if you'll remember

at the last meeting, that was in your packet as Board members. It is my understanding that that disclosure was inadvertent, and I believe that there has been no ex parte contact. The Board members who reviewed the document should disregard it, as I instructed them at the last meeting, and that the Board should base the final decision on the record before the Board pursuant to MAPA.

And on that point, I would just ask DEQ to explain to the Board exactly how that DEQ proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law made it into the Board packet. George.

MR. MATHIEUS: Madam Chair, Members of the Board, I do have a lengthy explanation, but I think it's frankly as simple as it was an honest human error. It was a clerical error. It was a misunderstanding of terms. I don't know how else to put it. I apologize that it happened, but in a sense that's what happened. Just human error, clerical error.

MS. CLERGET: I should clarify that nobody including me caught that error, and in retrospect, I could have reviewed the Board packet before the meeting, and I did not do that, and should have done it.

We have addressed this issue going forward, I believe, both with DEQ and within my office. We have moved management of the Board packet with respect to any contested cases. I review it now before it comes before the Board, before it's posted on the website.

We've clarified that with DEQ staff, and we have moved management of all the docket of all contested cases from DEQ staff or Board staff into my office, so it is physically removed from DEQ, and it is also I guess structurally removed from DEQ. It is with the Hearing Examiner. So my office now manages the docket in all contested cases, so that we can make sure that the docket is clear, and we have somebody who is not even physically located at DEQ making sure to check what is filed in front of the Board.

So I assume that this will not ever happen again, and I think we've addressed it sufficiently. And I do believe it was inadvertent, and I don't believe there is any harm to the Board as long as they will agree to base their final decision only on the record that is properly before them when that decision is called for.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Sarah. Here's the process we're going to go through today. We have parties here that want to speak on this issue. We're going to let DEQ speak again if they have anything more to add, and then representatives of the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company will also speak.

But before that, I wanted to see if
Board members needed any further clarification
from Sarah on what has occurred over the past, and
on how it's going to be prevented from ever
occurring again.

So Board members, any questions, comments?

MR. BUSBY: This is Dexter. I have a question for Sarah on procedure forward.

MS. CLERGET: Go ahead, Dexter.

MR. BUSBY: There was a complete hearing held on this. Was there adequate, should I say, records of that hearing and the testimony that you had that you cannot or can -- The question is: Do you need to conduct a complete hearing with the records that are already available?

MS. CLERGET: Thank you, Dexter. To address your question -- this is Sarah speaking

again -- the issue is not with the record. The issue is with the statute that we have to follow, the procedure that we have to follow based on the Montana Administrative Procedures Act, under Section 2-4-622, which states that if a Hearing Examiner is found unavailable, then the record can only -- the existing record can only be reviewed by a new Hearing Examiner if all the parties agree that the demeanor of witnesses is immaterial.

And in this case, I have been unable after the three status conferences to determine that all parties do agree that the demeanor of witnesses is immaterial. Because all parties do not agree -- and the parties I should clarify are DEQ and CFAC, the Columbia Falls Aluminum Company. So the Board is not a party for that purpose.

So the two parties need to agree, they have not agreed, and therefore, pursuant to the statute, there needs to be a new hearing. We can't just review the record that's already created.

So that's why my recommendation is to hold a new hearing, because essentially it is up to the parties and not up to BER. Does that answer your question?

MR. BUSBY: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Any other questions from Board members before we hear from the parties?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, I'm going to ask DEQ. Do you have further comments that you want to make?

MR. MOSER: Madam Chair, Members of the Board, my name is Kurt Moser, and I'm attorney for DEQ on this case. I just have some brief comments, and then I guess I would ask to possibly be heard from again after Counsel for CFAC speaks, because I'm pretty sure that they have a few things to say as well.

But I feel like, I think a Board member did mention, "Is there a record in this case?"

There absolutely is a record. We spent four days putting that record together, and a considerable amount of time last fall preparing for this hearing, enormous amounts of staff time from DEQ, and opposing Counsel's experts, witnesses from CFAC.

And so as I stand here today, I guess
I'm still very frustrated because we are in this
position that we're in. One of the things the

Board has to find before it decides to conduct a new hearing is that Mr. Reed is officially unavailable. That has to be the finding first.

DEQ has determined that we would waive the demeanor of the witness issue provided the Board did find that Mr. Reed was unavailable. I understand that he has moved, but I also understand that he indicated to us at a hearing that we had that he was leaving, and that he would in fact issue his findings of fact. He hasn't done that.

And so that is really why we're here, and that's too bad. So I guess I'd just like to reserve comments possibly after CFAC speaks.

Thank you.

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah Clerget. I want to ask one question of you to clarify, Kurt. Are you suggesting that the Board should not find Mr. Reed unavailable today?

MR. MOSER: I think that that is an option that the Board has. I think that perhaps it is an uncomfortable option, but it is an option that the Board has. There could be a more concerted effort to contact Mr. Reed. I understand the Board's attorney has made an

71 attempt to try to get a response from him. There was nothing. He did not respond to the email.

I think that it is possible that that could be explored. And that's a complicated issue. It is a complicated issue for the Board, it's a complicated issue for possibly Agency Legal Services as well, since that was Mr. Reed's former employer. So I think that there is possibly an avenue to do that. I don't know.

At the beginning of this when Mr.

Haladay took over as Hearing Examiner, immediately upon his appointment he issued a ruling, and already wanted to switch to basically have the Board find Mr. Reed unavailable. That was after Mr. Reed was gone for two months.

DEQ issued a response to that recommendation, and basically objected and said, "You need to let Mr. Reed rule on this because he said he would, and we haven't determined he's unavailable yet."

The amount of communication with Mr.

Reed has been difficult, but it seems like not impossible. So it feels like you could in fact possibly ask Mr. Reed to complete his job. But I quess I'll reserve further comment following CFAC.

Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Mr. Moser.

I'm going to call on the party from CFAC to speak,

and I meant to ask Mr. Moser to limit his comments

to ten minutes, and fortunately he did, and I'm

going to ask the same of the CFAC parties, if you

would.

MS. LAUGHNER: Thank you. My name is Katherine Laughner on behalf of Columbia Falls Aluminum Company.

And I wanted to explain CFAC's position in this, and we put our position, set our position forth in a November 20th filing, and I don't think you have that, but I would wish that the Board read that. And I guess because Mr. Moser and I have been here for years, and most of you are all new, I think it would help you understand our perspective, or my perspective.

With respect to the disclosure to BER of one side of DEQ's proposed findings of fact, I really wanted that the procedural anomalies in that issue be sorted out before there is any movement on proceeding with whether CFAC has to waive. It seems to me that this is the cart before the horse. CFAC believes that all these

procedural issues should be sorted out before the issue about the demeanor that Sarah brought up.

So I feel like the procedural issues are kind of being brushed off.

And BER has not yet determined Ben
Reed's unavailability, and I'm bringing that up
consistent with what Mr. Moser said, because he
left, and there was no contract in place or any
provision, it seems like a dilemma has been
created, and we either have to have a second
hearing -- which would be really expensive. It is
really hard to say -- or waive the demeanor of
witnesses, and that just really seems unfair to
me, and I don't think that issue should be brushed
off.

One of the things that Kurt and I did, and we talked to Sarah about this, was that because there is this ethical issue of the one side being presented, DEQ's findings of fact being accessed by the Board without our findings of facts, and we think that's unfair, unfortunate.

And I appreciate the remedial steps you guys have taken.

But I suggested, and Kurt agreed, that we talk to Betsy Brandborg. She is an attorney at

the State Bar, and she has special expertise in ethical issues. And so Kurt and I talked to her, and her position was --

Well, first of all, I guess on the Ben Reed issue, she said Agency Legal Services failed to perform, and I think that the BER should press that issue with whoever is in charge of Agency Legal Services, and get Ben Reed to follow through.

Sarah makes reference that there has been various contacts made, but to me, more of an effort should be made, because we had a four day hearing with eight witnesses, and neither Mr.

Moser or I want to go through that again.

One of the things that Betsy Brandborg pointed out to us is what's important is that there needs to be sufficient integrity to respect the decision. So if CFAC is feeling like one thing after another is not -- leads to just an irregular process, that should not be brushed off. It should be looked into.

With respect to the disclosure of one side, we talked to Betsy Brandborg about that, and she said it is really hard for people that aren't lawyers just to disregard something that they've

75 read. Lawyers might understand that, but she didn't think that was -- she wasn't endorsing

that, I quess I'll say.

There is other things we talked about, is that maybe we substitute out those BER members that read it, and thought that it was the actual Ben Reed's proposed findings. I think she would be available for further consultation on that. But her question was, "How does the BER propose to cure the inequity to CFAC in that mistake?," which was unfortunate.

I think if you would read my filing of November 20th, which provides you more background, I might feel more comfortable; but I think it is too early to make a decision on something that has these procedural anomalies. And also there is I think a problem with just declaring Ben Reed unavailable.

I think if you read my filing, you'll understand the background a little bit better.

And I would say that CFAC opposes the proposed order because of the reasons I just stated. Also we've only had like two days to look at it.

And in Sarah's proposed order, she says that -- kind of frustrated that we haven't made

that decision yet, but again, I think those procedural problems need to be addressed before we can get to the Ben Reed unavailability issue. And it shouldn't just be assumed that CFAC is not waiving the hearing.

After the procedural issues are solved, CFAC would then be in a position, I would be in a position to go back and talk to CFAC about what their view is. That's all I have.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you. I have a question, Ms. Laughner. What would you specifically say are the procedural issues? I just want to be clear on that.

MS. LAUGHNER: Well, I do think because DEQ's proposed findings of fact were submitted and read by four members, one member of the BER thought they were the actual --

CHAIR DEVENY: So you're talking about the findings of fact that were inadvertently put in the Board packet?

MS. LAUGHNER: That's one of the procedural issues that was a problem. The other procedural issue, the second one, is that Ben Reed told us that he was going to do the findings of fact. We find out months later there was no

contract in place between him and Agency Legal Services.

CHAIR DEVENY: So that's the second one, the Ben Reed issue. So those are the two things that you referred to as the procedural issues.

MS. LAUGHNER: Yes.

CHAIR DEVENY: That's what I needed to clarify. Thank you.

MS. LAUGHNER: Any other questions?

CHAIR DEVENY: Not at this time.

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah Clerget.

I'd like to address something that came up with the parties to the Board. I want to be clear that while I understand the Board is probably a little concerned about some of these issues, I think the fact that there is a statute addressing the unavailability of a Hearing Examiner should indicate to you that this is not an unprecedented scenario. It is not something that even the Legislature found uncommon. It is common enough that there is a statute telling us how to act in this kind of situation. And so I don't want the Board to feel like they are necessarily plowing new ground here.

CHAIR DEVENY: Sarah, could you remind

the Board what efforts have been made to locate

Ben Reed.

MS. CLERGET: Yes. I did speak to -What I have done specifically is that there is an
email attached to your proposed order from me
where I emailed him at his last known email
address, and asked that he respond indicating
whether or not he was going to provide this
proposed decision. He did not respond within the
amount of time that I gave him. That's what I
have done.

I know from reviewing the transcripts of prior meetings that there has been some indication that Mr. Haladay attempted to contact him in various ways. I don't have any personal knowledge of what that is other than what was in the transcript from the prior meetings.

I know that John Melcher, who is the Bureau Chief of Agency Legal Services, has attempted to contact him in various ways. I think some other members of ALSB attempted to have some contact with him, but I again have no personal knowledge of that contact.

So I'm not really comfortable testifying to what any of that contact may have been, other

than to say I think some of it is captured in the transcripts from the prior meetings, and from that, I know that it has happened over a period of now twelve months of trying to get this decision from him.

I would also indicate that it is not just that there was no contract with ALSB, that the prior Board, BER, also did not contract with Ben Reed to get this done independently of his State employment. So there is no contract with him, sort of private Counsel after he left State employment to get this done.

Also I understand from the transcripts that the parties together have not attempted to contact Mr. Reed at all. So I think most of the attempts to contact him have been from Mr. Haladay and within Agency Legal Services, but all of them in the various forms have been unsuccessful over the last twelve months.

CHAIR DEVENY: Thank you, Sarah. Mr.

Moser, did you have some other comments that you
wanted to make? You had mentioned you reserved
comments. Now would be a good time. Do you have
any?

MR. MOSER: I don't have any further

comments. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Do Board members have any other questions of DEQ or Sarah about this?

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton. I have one question for Sarah, if I could.

CHAIR DEVENY: Yes, John, go ahead.

MR. FELTON: Your email was sent to Ben Reed October 27th, and then you requested a response within a week. Did by any chance that email include a return receipt or a read receipt? Do you know if he got it?

MS. CLERGET: I don't know that he got it because it was sent to a gmail account. Those read receipts don't -- with the way the State email works, they don't often work. So I don't know that he got it, other than to say that it did not bounce back to me as undeliverable, which it will do if the email address is no longer active. I will get a notice back that says the email was undeliverable, and that did not happen in this case. So I know the email was delivered to that address. I don't know whether or not he opened it or viewed it.

MR. FELTON: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: Any other comments or

questions?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Let's discuss the recommendations that Sarah has made to the Board. There is four pieces to it. We can take each one. Sarah has a comment.

MS. CLERGET: I would suggest that based on CFAC's position, it might actually be in the best interests of economy if you discuss the fourth issue first, since CFAC is maintaining the position that they can't comment on the demeanor of witnesses until after this preliminary, in the their opinion, preliminary issue is dealt with.

We're going to talk about the fourth issue in Sarah's suggested recommendations in the proposed order, which is that the disclosure of DEQ's proposed findings of fact prior to the September meeting was inadvertent, and did not constitute exparte contact, and the Board members who reviewed the document will disregard it, and the final decision will be based solely on the record for the Board for decision pursuant to MAPA.

I agree with that recommendation. I really concur that this was human error, and

amidst brand new staff, brand new Board, I really believe it was inadvertent, and I don't believe there was ex parte efforts between Board members. And I believe that those of us who are on the Board are truly capable of disregarding anything that they might have inadvertently read, and that we can discard it, and keep an open mind as this case moves forward.

Do Board members have any discussion about this particular issue, recommendation in the proposed order? Do people feel differently or feel strongly otherwise?

(No response)

think people agree with me. So is this something that we would put in a motion? So I would so move that we agree with this Conclusion No. 4, what I just read, that you all have before you. I would make a motion that we accept this as a recommendation. Could I get a second on that?

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton. I'll second it.

CHAIR DEVENY: John Felton seconded that. Is there discussion on the motion that has been made and seconded?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing no discussion, we'll go for a vote. All those in favor, say aye.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: All those opposed.

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: The motion passes.

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah speaking again. Now I would suggest that you perhaps move to Item No. 1, whether or not Mr. Reed will be declared unavailable.

CHAIR DEVENY: Let's have a discussion about whether the Board members feel that Mr. Reed is unavailable as a Hearing Examiner. We've heard quite a bit of testimony about this. Do Board members have any comments in regards to this?

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton. I think that a good faith effort has been made to get a response from him, and given the lack of response, I would make a motion that we find him unavailable.

CHAIR DEVENY: I would second that motion. I agree with you, John. Is there further discussion by the Board on this motion that has been seconded? This would be declaring Mr. Reed

unavailable as Hearing Examiner.

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing no further discussion, we'll take this to a vote. All those in favor of the motion, please say aye.

(Response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?

(No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, the motion passes.

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah speaking again. Members of the Board, I might suggest at this point before you move forward that you ask for the comment that CFAC indicated that once these two procedural issues were dealt with, that they might have a different position about waiving the demeanor of witnesses.

If no answer is forthcoming on that issue, then I would suggest that you order a new hearing as outlined in the second number of my proposed order, but I think we need to hear from CFAC first.

CHAIR DEVENY: Ms. Laughner, would you speak to this now that we've addressed those two procedural issues.

MS. LAUGHNER: I would respectfully ask
that the Board be given my November 20th filing,
and also an opportunity to discuss the matter with

4 my client.

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah. And I guess I would just recommend to the Board, or remind the Board that we've now had three status conferences, and at each of them I've indicated that this outcome was likely from the Board at the next meeting. So I believe that CFAC has had adequate notice that this was coming, and absent a specific statement from them that they will waive demeanor of witnesses, I would suggest that you move on to order that a new hearing be held in this case.

As to the filing of November 20th, if the Board would like, I believe that the Board is free to review that filing, and I'm happy to provide it to the Board.

CHAIR DEVENY: Is that something we should see now, or --

MS. CLERGET: It is up to you. You're welcome to review it. I believe I summarized it, its main points in my proposed order, so I don't believe there is any substance there that you're

not aware of.

CHAIR DEVENY: Could you take us through that, and then if Ms. Laughner has concerns about the way that was presented in the materials, then perhaps we could consider that.

MS. CLERGET: Sure. I discussed this in my proposed order. I think the title of the filing is stated on Page 4 as response prior to November 20th to 2017 scheduled telephone conference. So in the first full paragraph on that Page 4, I kind of outline what that filing was.

Just to go through it, there were several sections. The first section requested voluntary recusal of John Dearment, which has already been done.

The second section discussed ex parte communication of Montana DEQ's proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. That is what I stated to you, the arguments that ex parte contact had occurred; and the potential remedy being an investigation by a third party. You've heard discussion about Betsy Brandborg being that third party. And CFAC then described to you the conversation that they had with Betsy, CFAC and

DEQ had with Betsy Brandborg.

And then the third point of that filing was that BER has not made a finding of unavailability for Montana Code Annotated 2-4-622 is not yet applicable, and essentially it states what Ms. Laughner summarized as CFAC's position that we're putting the cart before the horse, until that finding of unavailability was made, that they would not address the issue of demeanor of witnesses.

So that's a summary of the filing. If you would like to see the filing itself, I'm happy to provide it to the Board. I believe that DEQ should be heard on whether or not they object to that before you decide. And we can provide the Board more time to review that filing or allow CFAC to consult with their client, if you prefer. It is entirely up to the Board. As I stated, I don't believe that either of these conclusions should be a surprise to CFAC at this point.

MS. LAUGHNER: May I?

CHAIR DEVENY: Ms. Laughner, go ahead.

MS. LAUGHNER: I wouldn't say that they're a surprise. I'm just asking for an opportunity to discuss it with my client, and

inform them of what happened today. I don't believe that DEQ has any objection to not setting a hearing today. If we can avoid that, that's probably a benefit to all of us. So I would again ask the opportunity to inform my client, and discuss it with them.

CHAIR DEVENY: What's the likelihood, do you think, that your client would agree to -- let me make sure I've got the correct terminology.

MS. CLERGET: The demeanor of witnesses.

CHAIR DEVENY: -- waive the demeanor if you brought this to them? You have discussed this with them. You must have some sense.

MS. CLERGET: I want to caution you,
Chris, because I don't want -- the communication
between Katherine and her client is privileged,
and it is not appropriate to --

CHAIR DEVENY: I apologize if that was an inappropriate question, and I will withdraw that question if you feel uncomfortable answering it.

MS. LAUGHNER: In addition, we have had this proposed order for two days, and I haven't had the opportunity to talk to my client about that proposed order. I don't see the down side of

giving me the opportunity to talk to my client.

And I think Sarah is frustrated having to go through this process, but it is important to us, because if we don't feel like we've gotten a fair shake here, after all the things that happened. There has been two or three of these, "Oops. I didn't mean it," and I think to be fair, I would just like some more time.

CHAIR DEVENY: Okay. Thank you. Could we hear from DEQ with regards to the request from Ms. Laughner, and anything else you think is appropriate to add.

MR. MOSER: Yes. Madam Chair, Members of the Board. What was the specific question on the -- as far as not making a decision on that?

Do we object to that today?

CHAIR DEVENY: Yes.

MR. MOSER: No, we don't have any objection to Ms. Laughner having the opportunity to discuss that further with her client. We do not have any objection to the Board being provided Ms. Laughner's filing. I guess our position is there is no ex parte, was no ex parte contact, for the record. And I know the Board has already made that finding. So that's our position on that.

Any other questions for DEQ?

CHAIR DEVENY: Do Board members have questions of DEQ?

MR. FELTON: This is John Felton again.

I have a procedural question, not necessarily for DEQ. Can I ask that now?

CHAIR DEVENY: Yes, go ahead.

MR. FELTON: So if I'm following this right, the real question is whether CFAC is willing to waive the demeanor of the witness question. If we act on Item 2 and 3 in Sarah's proposed order, could that decision be made subsequent to that action, or would we need to wait until our next meeting two months from now to act on Items 2 and 3?

CHAIR DEVENY: I'm going to give that to Sarah.

MS. CLERGET: I am just thinking through that. I think it might be possible to act on Items 2 and 3. It would take some contingency motions. Essentially what you're going to have to do is say if CFAC waives the demeanor of witnesses, then "X" and "Y" will happen. If CFAC does not waive the demeanor of witnesses, then "A" and "B" will happen.

I think that's possible if that's what you would like to do. If that's what you would like to do, then I would propose that you would, for example, find if CFAC waives the demeanor of witnesses, and a review of the record is appropriate, then the Board answers Item No. 3 in the following manner. If CFAC does not waive the demeanor of witnesses, then Item No. 3 is answered as follows. Does that make sense?

MR. FELTON: It does. Then I have a follow up. Then I understand that the desire for CFAC's attorney to visit with her client and think about that. And I'm new to the Board. This is, again, a procedural question. Would we need to wait until the February meeting to act on this, or does this Board have the capacity to act via email or other means other than a regularly scheduled meeting?

So in other words, if CFAC comes back and says either "A," "We waive the demeanor of witnesses," or "B," "We don't," do we need to wait two months to act on this, or can we act -- (inaudible) --

MS. CLERGET: This is Sarah again, and I'll answer your question. You cannot act by

email. It needs to be a public meeting. However, at the Board's pleasure, you're welcome to set a special Board meeting if you so choose. It is not unprecedented for boards to do that with a single agenda item between regular board meetings. That agenda item has to be publicly noticed and available, and then any deliberation has to happen on the record in a public meeting.

So the first part of the answer to your question is no, it can't be done by email. The second part of the answer is: But it could be done before the next meeting if the Board so chooses under those circumstances.

MR. FELTON: So then if you'll indulge me one last question. This I guess is more to the parties. Are the parties okay waiting two months to get that question answered?

CHAIR DEVENY: I couldn't hear your question.

MR. FELTON: My question is really for the parties involved. Are they willing to wait two months to determine what the next step is?

CHAIR DEVENY: I think they've indicated that they were.

MR. MOSER: Yes. Madam Chair, Members

of the Board, this is Kurt Moser for DEQ. Yes.

We don't have any objection to waiting until the

next meeting.

MS. LAUGHNER: Katherine Laughner. No objection.

CHAIR DEVENY: So there has been no objection. I just want to remind Board members. This issue has been going on now for a year, and we talked at our last meeting that it was really time to be moving forward, and that's why we are addressing this issue today. Further questions, John?

MR. FELTON: No. Thank you.

CHAIR DEVENY: I have a question of Sarah. If we did convene a meeting of the Board members say in two weeks, is that enough time to give public notice? Remind me what those notices are.

MS. CLERGET: Yes. The public notice needs to be reasonable, and case law has indicated that two weeks is definitely reasonable. I think as little as three days is probably reasonable. So two weeks would definitely suffice.

CHAIR DEVENY: So I am thinking that I sort of like that idea of perhaps us reconvening

telephonically in a short period of time down the road would allow CFAC to meet with their clients, and at the same time allow us to move forward with this without another two month delay, and then who knows what's after that.

So what do Board members think of that?

And we don't have to decide on a date today. We could poll members to see sometime, hopefully in December, we could maybe find a day when we could get a quorum together and take some action on this. So what are Board members feeling?

MR. FELTON: I like the idea.

CHAIR DEVENY: Who was that?

MR. FELTON: This is John.

CHAIR DEVENY: John Felton. Thanks,

John. Other members?

MR. BUSBY: This is Dexter. I'm going to have very limited availability for the next -- until after the first. I think this has sat for, like you say, more than two years, maybe three years. I'm not sure that we need to push it forward, not that I would be opposed to participating in a special meeting. It is just I'm not sure we need to put everybody through that.

CHAIR DEVENY: Other Board member 1 2 comments? Thoughts? 3 (No response) CHAIR DEVENY: Nobody has any thoughts. 4 Let's throw it out as a motion then. I'll move 5 that we postpone making a decision on the proposed 6 7 order for a period not to exceed three weeks, during which time we will find a meeting where we 8 can bring a quorum together of the Board for 9 10 making a decision on this contested case with 11 regards to the proposed order. 12 MS. CLERGET: Items 2 and 3. 13 CHAIR DEVENY: Items 2 and 3 of the Is there a second? 14 proposed order. 15 MS. HANSON: This is Hillary. I'll second it. 16 CHAIR DEVENY: 17 The motion has been moved 18 and seconded. Now do we have discussion? 19 (No response) 20 CHAIR DEVENY: No discussion. Let's 21 take a vote. All those in favor of the motion, 22 please say aye. 23 (Response) 24 CHAIR DEVENY: Those opposed. 25 (No response)

CHAIR DEVENY: It appears none were opposed, so we're going to just give the party a little bit more time to meet with their clients, and convene another meeting of the Board telephonically.

MS. CLERGET: I just want to be clear that you guys assigned this to me for the purposes of procedure at the last meeting. That will continue through this two week period until we get the new meeting set up?

CHAIR DEVENY: Yes, that would be good.

And you could also provide the Board members with

Ms. Laughner's document, if you would.

MS. CLERGET: Yes, I can do that.

CHAIR DEVENY: Are we through with this particular issue?

MS. CLERGET: Yes. So the next item on the agenda is the Board Counsel update. This is mostly a placeholder for you guys to have a chance to ask me any questions for general issues that you have.

The only general issue I have for the Board is that there is -- We discussed a little bit during the orientation and at the last meeting the memo that's posted on the Board website

outlining procedure for appearing before the Board and getting filings in front of the Board.

I would like, if you guys are amenable, to have the opportunity to present a draft update to that memo to you at the next meeting, if you believe that's a good use of my time, and my staff time. And I apologize because I wanted to have that to you by this Board meeting, but I did not have a chance to get that done yet. So I wanted to find out if you guys are amenable to putting that on as a project.

CHAIR DEVENY: I certainly am. I can hardly stand to hear from you too much longer because it is hurting. So other Board members, are you okay with that?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Yes.

CHAIR DEVENY: That sounds good, Sarah.

MS. CLERGET: Any other questions for me as your Counsel?

(No response)

MS. CLERGET: Hearing none, that concludes the Board Counsel update, Madam Chair.

CHAIR DEVENY: And now I'd like to open this meeting to public comment. The public may

1	comment on any public matter within the
2	jurisdiction of the Board that's not otherwise on
3	the agenda and that is not related to the
4	contested cases. Is there anybody here or online
5	that would like to speak?
6	(No response)
7	CHAIR DEVENY: Hearing none, I think
8	we're through with that section, and unless
9	anybody has anything else, I'd like to move to
10	adjourn. Could I get a second?
11	MR. BUSBY: I'll second it. This is
12	Dexter.
13	CHAIR DEVENY: Dexter seconded the
14	motion to adjourn, and all in favor, please say
15	aye.
16	(Response)
17	CHAIR DEVENY: Any opposed?
18	(No response)
19	CHAIR DEVENY: Meeting is adjourned.
20	(The proceedings were concluded
21	at 11:25 a.m.)
22	* * * *
23	
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CERTIFICATE 1 2 STATE OF MONTANA) : SS. 3 COUNTY OF LEWIS & CLARK 4 I, LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR, Court Reporter, 5 Notary Public in and for the County of Lewis & 6 7 Clark, State of Montana, do hereby certify: That the proceedings were taken before me at 8 the time and place herein named; that the 9 10 proceedings were reported by me in shorthand and transcribed using computer-aided transcription, 11 12 and that the foregoing - 98 - pages contain a true 13 record of the proceedings to the best of my 14 ability. 15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal 16 17 this _____, 2017. 18 19 LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR 20 Court Reporter - Notary Public 21 My commission expires 22 March 9, 2020. 23 24 25

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