



LAKE COUNTY

106 4th Ave. E.

Polson, Mt. 59860

August 25, 2023

Congress Matt Rosendale
3300 Second Ave. North
Suites 7-8
Billings, MT. 59101

Dear Congressman Rosendale,

Your interest in the low water level in Flathead Lake this summer is appreciated. Our response to the questions you posed are as follows:

- A water level more than one foot below full pool of 2,893 feet begins to have significant impact on the ability to recreate on Flathead Lake as well as creating serious public safety problems. When the lake level dropped to 1.5 feet below full pool, residents and businesses began removing boats from lifts. In addition to not being able to get on and off lifts, boat operation became more dangerous as rocks and submerged objects became more hazardous. Another extremely serious concern never raised is the impact on public safety. Many lakeshore homeowners have single ingress and egress routes to their homes and property. The lake is their emergency exit, and with boats no longer available, that exit is denied. The increase of wildfire danger to lakeshore homeowners coupled with the loss of the use of lake as an emergency exit is a recipe for disaster.
- The ability to refill Hungry Horse is dependent on snowpack. There have been numerous years when Hungry Horse did not completely refill without negatively impacting the level of Flathead Lake. Maintaining Hungry Horse at full pool, or near full pool, is not as crucial as keeping Flathead at full pool.
- The TMT concerns related to downstream biological impacts were not specific nor discussed in detail. Also, not addressed at all were any biological impacts of the lowered level of Flathead Lake.
- The level of Flathead Lake is indeed cause for concern. In the spring of 2022, an inability to manage the lake level resulted in a level greater than full pool resulting in numerous docks being under water. This spring saw the lake nearly reach full pool, but then began an immediate drop in level. In an interview with KPAX news on July 7, Energy Keepers CEO Brian Lipscomb stated that the "lake level will continue to drop for another week before stabilizing." Lake level on July 7th was 2,891.43 and on August 24th was 2,890.46. The numbers verify that this did not happen and once again citizens were given misleading and incorrect information. It is apparent that for at least the past two years Energy Keepers have been unable to manage the lake level.
- It would be very helpful if the drought mitigation plan for SKQ Dam was available to local governments. Copies of contracts EK has with out-of-state utilities and downstream users of Flathead Lake water would be useful in determining what are the priorities and contractual obligations of EK.

We hope this information is helpful. Please contact us in the future if we can help in any way.

Sincerely,

Gale Decker
Chairman, Lake County Commissioners