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Our ranch and nursery are 6 miles NE of Big Timber. We have a creek, Otter Creek, running through our property near our house and along our irrigated land. We also have numerous springs, some wetland and other small creeks on the property. There are five drilled wells on the ranch. Water flowing through and here on the ranch is integral to our business and health.

I am a member of the NPRC affiliate here in SG Cty called Cottonwood Resource Council and within that affiliate I am a member of a committee that has been studying the possible impacts of deep gas development in Sweet Grass County.

It is clear from the poll that Montanans from all walks of life understand how precious clean water is so it is no wonder that one of the major concerns I, as well as our gas committee, have is water contamination from gas wells. Last week our committee visited Pinedale, Wyoming to see and talk about the impacts of deep gas development on that community. We also had an extensive tour of the Pinedale Anticline gas field which is presently being developed. We viewed every aspect of the field from drilling and fracking to seeing actual producing wells and reclamation work.

There is a tremendous amount of water used in the drilling and fracking process of deep gas wells - I think approx 1,000,000 gallons - and there is lots of concern in Pinedale about water. The company who toured us around the gas field - Questar - says they are doing everything they can to be a good neighbor. They recycle most of the water they use in the well development process and thus have to use very little new water for each well. They haven't drilled any new wells for several years. Any water they do treat and discharge they claim is so clean it is like RO water. However, there is some evidence of water being contaminated in Pinedale as well as other areas where fracking is used. There is no firm evidence that it is as a result of gas development and especially fracking, but it doesn't seem right that fracking is exempt from the Safe Drinking Water Act and that the gas companies will not disclose the exact chemicals and formulas in their fracking fluids. Gas companies come and go, but those of us living here are left to deal with the long-term consequences of gas development and if water is contaminated we may never be able to make it pure again. We absolutely need better regulation.

Here in SG Cty we must understand how the groundwater system flows and functions, we need firm baselines and monitoring systems before the gas companies start any significant business here.

The poll numbers affirm Montanans' expectations that gas companies be good neighbors and be accountable for operating in a way that is transparent and subject to public oversight. We need to make that happen.

Thanks.