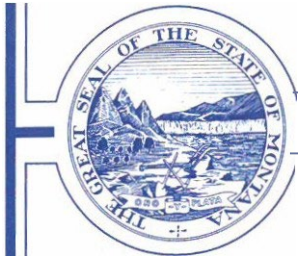


MONTANA WATERCOURT



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April 10, 2024

Via email

Chief Justice Mike McGrath
Montana Supreme Court
215 N. Sanders Street
Helena, MT 59601

Re: Application for Associate Water Judge, Montana Water Court

Justice McGrath:

Please accept this letter and the enclosed resume as my application for appointment for another term as Associate Water Judge. I seek reappointment for several reasons.

First, it has been the highest privilege of my professional career to serve as a judge with the Water Court the past five years. I care deeply about the work we do and its importance to Montana's water users and the public generally. Whether in the adjudication context or in other matters before the Court, I am mindful of how each decision affects important property rights and also builds the structure to guide water use and allocation into the future. I believe my experience in private practice and during my time with the Court allows me to make fair and impartial decisions consistent with these important policies.

Second, it is an enormous privilege to work with my colleagues at the Water Court. Judge McElyea, Sara Calkins, and the water masters and support staff are some of the most dedicated, intelligent people I know. We function well as a team that strives to provide the highest quality public service. During my time with the Court we have implemented numerous changes to make a somewhat daunting process approachable for everyone who participates in the adjudication – from the most sophisticated attorneys to unrepresented parties who may be in a court proceeding for the first time. I feel that I am an important part of this team and I am committed to helping the Court continue to serve the public efficiently and effectively.

Third, and somewhat related, the Water Court is moving rapidly into the phase of issuing final decrees that will culminate decades of hard work. The Court has systems in place to achieve an accurate and comprehensive adjudication that will stand the test of time. Montana's adjudication likely is the most complex attempted anywhere in the country. There still are important cases underway and many yet to come. I remain dedicated to the work necessary to achieve the overall goal of moving the adjudication to its proper completion.

I enclose my resume with this letter. The information listed highlights some of my background and the cases and work I have undertaken during my time with the Court. The summary of cases does not reflect the totality of my work, and largely omits numerous active cases I currently preside over. But hopefully the list provides a snapshot of the general range. Additionally, I regularly mediate Water Court and District Court water-related cases. I also participate in various stakeholder and Water Policy Interim Committee activities. Lastly, I enjoy providing mentorship to the water masters and others, and hope to continue to do so.

Thank you for considering this application. I would welcome the opportunity to continue my service as a water judge. I am happy to provide any additional information or answer any questions.

Sincerely,



Stephen R. Brown