

November 15, 2024

Via email

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

Re: Application for Associate Water Judge, Montana Water Court

Honorable Chief Justice of the Montana Supreme Court:

Please accept this letter and resume as my application for appointment as Associate Water Judge of the Montana Water Court.

My professional experience underscores my commitment to water users in Montana. Over the last fifteen years, my work as a private attorney and as a former Water Master provides me with a unique understanding of water users and water rights in Montana.

In 2010, I began my career in water rights as a law clerk at the Water Court. From 2011 through 2015, I served as a Water Master. During that time, I had the privilege of working under Judge C. Bruce Loble, Chief Judge Russ McElyea and Associate Judge Douglas Ritter. I also had the benefit of working with several of the Water Masters and Judicial Assistants who continue to work at the Water Court.

At the end of 2015, I joined my law partner Dana Pepper in founding River and Range Law, PLLC. Our law firm's focus is water rights and water related property issues. I represent large property owners, small farms and ranches, municipalities, non-profits, canal and ditch companies, developers, and a variety of other interests. I pride myself in having the ability to clearly explain complicated water right issues to my clients as well as other attorneys and the Court.

Water law has a reputation for being a difficult area of law. The Water Court is just one venue within a complex system in which Montana water users are required to navigate. In our system of venues, statutes and administrative rules, the adjudication proceedings in the Water Court are the foundation for protecting water rights in Montana. As the Associate Water Judge I would strive to uphold the rule of law and issue the best decisions possible to build a body of case law that others may rely upon.

I am committed to the work of the Montana Water Court. I believe there needs to be continued vigilance in finishing the adjudication swiftly and efficiently. The task at hand is to complete the adjudication and fulfill the long-standing responsibility to Montana and to the water users who have invested precious time and resources awaiting final, enforceable water rights. Moving swiftly and efficiently must be balanced with respect for the rule of law, the issuance of clear and consistent rulings, respect for and understanding of the parties appearing in the Court, and acknowledgement of the time, cost and stress of proceedings on water users.

My real-world experience representing water users has provided me with the wisdom necessary to fulfill the role of the Associate Water Judge. I would be honored to serve Montana as the Associate Water Judge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bina R. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bina" being the most prominent.

Bina R. Peters