

**TESTIMONY OF MARIANNE ROOSE
MONTANA LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSIONER
LIBBY HEARING
SEPTEMBER 25, 2008**

GOOD MORNING CHAIRMAN BAUCUS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY.

MY NAME IS MARIANNE ROOSE, AND I AM CURRENTLY SERVING IN MY 12TH YEAR AS MONTANA LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSIONER. I WAS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IN DECEMBER OF 1999 WHEN WR GRACE REQUESTED THAT THEIR RECLAMATION BOND BE RELEASED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA, DEQ.

UPON HEARING OF THIS REQUEST SEVERAL FORMER WR GRACE EMPLOYEES CAME TO THE COMMISSIONERS TO REQUEST THAT WE DENY APPROVAL FOR RELEASE OF THE BOND DUE TO THE SEVERE HEALTH CONDITIONS THAT MANY WERE EXPERIENCING AND HAD BEEN EXPERIENCING FOR SEVERAL YEARS, EVEN THOUGH THE MINE HAD BEEN CLOSED FOR SOME TIME. THEY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT IT HAD BEEN PROPERLY CLEANED UP AND THAT THERE WERE TOO MANY UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM ASBESTOS EXPOSURE.

BEFORE AGREEING TO RELEASE THE BOND, THE COMMISSIONERS HELD A PUBLIC HEARING TO PROVIDE OUR CONSTITUENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS. IT IMMEDIATELY BECAME EVIDENT THAT THERE WAS A REASON TO BE CONCERNED FOR THE HEALTH CONDITION OF FORMER WR GRACE EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES.

AS MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE DANGER AND EFFECT OF THE CONTAMINATION FROM THE ASBESTOS AT THE MINE WAS EXPOSED, IT WAS REVEALED THAT IN FACT, MANY FORMER EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE HAD BEEN EXPOSED. AT THIS POINT, WE TOO AGREED THAT THE BOND SHOULD NOT BE RELEASED.

SENATOR BAUCUS CAME TO LIBBY AND LISTENED TO OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE EXPOSURE OF CONTAMINATION AND BOTH CURRENT AND LONG TERM HEALTH CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNITY OF LIBBY, MONTANA. HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING EPA ADMINSTRATOR, CHRISTY TODD WHITMAN, TO LIBBY FOR A

CONGRESSIONAL FIELD HEARING. IT WAS HELD IN THE LIBBY HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM IN SEPTEMBER OF 2001 AND WAS ATTENDED BY THE ENTIRE SCHOOL BODY AND MANY COMMUNITY RESIDENTS.

AFTER ADMINSTRATOR WHITMAN HEARD OF THE DEPTH OF EXPOSURE AND DEVASTATION TO OUR COMMUNITY AND CONSTITUENTS, SHE PROMISED OUR COMMUNITY THAT SHE WOULD RETURN TO DC AND DECLARE LIBBY, MONTANA A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY. THIS PROMISE WAS A RAY OF HOPE AT A VERY DARK TIME THAT JUST MAYBE PEOPLE THAT WERE SUFFERING FROM THE ASBESTOS EXPOSURE WOULD BE CARED FOR.

WELL, THE DECLARATION NEVER HAPPENED. ADMINISTRATOR WHITMAN LEFT HER POSITION SOON AFTER GIVING US HER PROMISE. SO, TODAY SEVEN YEARS LATER WE ARE STILL STRUGGLING WITH DEVASTATING HEALTH ISSUES AND CONTAMINATION OF OUR COMMUNITY FROM THE EXPOSURE, AND WE ARE STILL WAITING FOR THE EPA TO DECLARE A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN LIBBY, MONTANA DUE TO THE EXTREME ASBESTOS EXPOSURE. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROMISE OF A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IS NEEDED EVEN MORE TODAY THAN EVER, DUE TO THE CONTINUAL INCREASE OF INDIVIDUALS NEEDING TREATMENT.

THE CENTER FOR ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASE (ALSO KNOWN AS THE CARD CLINIC) IS THE ONE PLACE IN LIBBY THAT PROVIDES ON-GOING HEALTH CARE FOR THE VICTIMS OF EXPOSURE. THE CLINIC IS WHERE PATIENTS FEEL CONFIDENT THEY WILL RECEIVE THE TREATMENT AND CARE THEY NEED.

I AM ALSO THE COMMISSIONER THAT SERVES ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CARD CLINIC. THROUGH THIS POSITION I HAVE BECOME WELL AWARE OF THE URGENT NEED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE CONTINUED SUCCESS AND DAILY OPERATION OF THE CLINIC SO IT CAN CONTINUE PROVIDING THE MUCH NEEDED HEALTH CARE AND RESEARCH FOR THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE SO DESPARATELY IN NEED.

THE VICTIMS FROM EXPOSURE TO THE ASBESTOS CONTAMINATION IN LIBBY, MONTANA NEED YOUR HELP IN RECOGNIZING THEIR PLIGHT. WE NEED YOU TO DECLARE A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY SO THEIR HEALTH CARE NEEDS FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE CAN BE MET. LIBBY, MONTANA NEEDS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND A LONG TERM PLAN TO CARE FOR THESE VICTIMS OF ASBESTOS EXPOSURE.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALLOWING ME TO APPEAR BEFORE YOU TODAY TO SHARE OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND HEALTH CARE CONCERNS. IT HAS BEEN AN HONOR. I WOULD BE HAPPY TO TAKE ANY QUESTIONS.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,
MARIANNE ROOSE
LINCOLN COUNTY COMMISSIONER/MONTANA