

## Letter from Sam Chase to Seattle District Engineer, April 28, 1958

*Butte, Montana  
April 28, 1958*

Seattle District Engineer  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Sir:

We have read the Information Bulletin . . . on the Corps of Engineers study of the proposed Knowles Project on the Flathead River in Montana and desire to comment on the proposal. . . . The reasons which led us to oppose the Paradise project convince us that it is necessary to oppose Knowles. These reasons will be briefly summarized as follows:

1. It would flood thousands of acres of valuable agricultural land, hay land and grazing land. . . .
2. It would displace approximately 2700 residents who make their homes and conduct their businesses in the reservoir area.
3. It would cause irreparable damage to business, agriculture and industry in the region and would result in the loss of thousands of dollars a year in tax revenues in Lake and Sanders counties.
4. It would flood out and force relocation of the railroad between Ravalli and Paradise

and would threaten the existence of railroad service to Polson. . . .

5. Due to the limitations of the water in the Flathead River, the plant would produce power at low load factor and extremely high cost per kilowatt-hour.
6. The drawdown on this reservoir would . . . be detrimental to the attractiveness and recreational value of the Flathead valley. . . .
7. It would preclude construction by The Montana Power Company of the Buffalo Rapids Project which would develop power for the area without extensive flooding and dislocation and which would result in the payment of additional taxes in Lake and Sanders counties. . . .

In view of this situation, The Montana Power Company favors construction of the Buffalo Rapids site and is opposed to the construction of the Knowles Project. . . .

*Sincerely,  
Sam B. Chase*

Source: *Montana Governors Records, 1889–1962. Manuscript Collection 35* [box 153 folder 8] Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives. Excerpted in *Not In Precious Metals Alone: A Manuscript History of Montana* (Helena, 1976): 264–65.