

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



MIKE COONEY  
LT. GOVERNOR

September 11, 2020

The Honorable Steve Daines  
United States Senator, State of Montana  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Greg Gianforte  
United States Congressman, State of Montana  
1222 Longworth HOB  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Daines and Congressman Gianforte:

Montanans have a long and proud history of working together to solve challenges we face on public lands and to do so in ways that support the needs of local economies, while maintaining our hunting, fishing, wildlife and outdoor heritage. In 2014, a group of ranchers, sportsmen, outfitters, business owners, and conservationists came together to pass the Rocky Mountain Front Heritage Act, permanently protecting 67,000 acres of public lands along the majestic Rocky Mountain Front. In 2019, business owners in Paradise Valley rallied together to pass the Yellowstone Gateway Protection Act, laying the foundation to protect the Yellowstone River from the contamination of two potential gold mines at the doorstep of Yellowstone National Park.

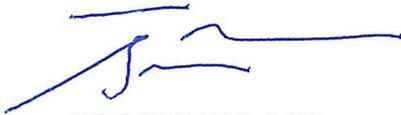
In due course, you both signed on to this legislation. During my seven years as Governor, Montanans have fostered bipartisan collaboration between private landowners, conservation groups, industry and state and federal partners to address some of our most vexing natural resource challenges, ranging from federal forest management and restoration, to keeping the iconic Greater Sage Grouse off the Endangered Species list.

Notably, Senator Jon Tester again introduced the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act (S. 1765) last year, a proposal crafted by timber mill operators, mountain bikers, outfitters, business owners, and conservationists offering an important opportunity for Washington DC to once again embrace what works on the ground here in Montana. The BCSA would give a boost to our local timber industry, offer new recreation opportunities to snowmobilers and mountain bikers, and permanently protect 79,000 acres of public lands that are crucial for the health of our wildlife, the Blackfoot River, and the river's significant populations of wild, native trout. The river itself contributes over 9,000 guided outfitter days per year, contributing far beyond its impressive headwaters and reaches to the economic well-being and vitality of towns and cities across our state.

Because the bill was crafted by the public and for the public, the BCSA enjoys the support of 73 percent of Montanans, both Democrats and Republicans. It is time for all of Montana's congressional delegation to work with their leadership to give this bill a vote. During the legislative interim, both of you provided statements regarding the future of Montana's Wilderness Study Areas emphasizing the importance of local support and of addressing public recreation access needs in any effort to overcome past disagreements. The BCSA does an exceptional job of incorporating these core principles.

The BCSA represents our state at its best and is an acknowledgement that the health and well-being of our public lands and our communities goes hand in hand. These days, even an ounce of collaboration here in Montana, contributes to the cure for our national political polarization. Passing the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act would not only secure our public lands heritage for generations to come—it would seed the kind of productive and pragmatic governance we all need heading into this election and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Bullock', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE BULLOCK  
Governor

CC: Senator Jon Tester