

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



ANGELA MCLEAN  
LT. GOVERNOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 22, 2014**

**CONTACT:** Dave Parker, Communications Director, 444-9844  
Mike Wessler, Deputy Communications Director, 444-9725

### **Governor Bullock Opposes Expansion of Powder River Training Complex**

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock today sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Secretary of Transportation Anthony Foxx stating his strong and continued opposition to the expansion of the Powder River Training Complex (PRTC) to train bombers from Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota and Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. Earlier this year, Bullock wrote a letter outlining responsible ways that the proposed expansion could be changed to be made acceptable to Montanans; because these recommendations were not implemented into the most recent proposal, Bullock is encouraging Hagel and Foxx not to move forward on the plan.

“There is no doubt that Montanans support our nation’s efforts to enhance national security,” Bullock said in his most recent letter. “Montanans volunteer to serve our country at a higher rate than any other state in the nation. The PRTC expansion proposal, however, would be at the expense of the livelihoods and economic prosperity of many Montanans.”

In his letter, Bullock highlights the negative impacts that expansion of the training center would have on farmers, ranchers, energy developers, municipal and private airports and the overall safety of Montanans. Bullock also noted that the sonic booms created by some of the bombers would be disruptive to livestock and wildlife. Of particular concern is the Greater Sage Grouse, a bird the State of Montana has been working to keep off the Endangered Species List. Earlier this year, Bullock created the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program to ensure management of the bird remains in state hands.

While the Governor strongly encouraged Hagel and Foxx to pursue the “No Action” alternative, he proposed several revisions for the safety and economic security of Montanans. These revisions included providing real time advisories of military aircraft operations to civilian aircraft, providing low altitude radar and communication capabilities within the training center operations and expanding and detailing the adaptive management approach.

The U.S. Air Force and Federal Aviation Administration are currently seeking to expand the PRTC to 28,000 square miles in North and South Dakota, Wyoming, and southeastern Montana, making it the largest training area in the continental United States.

Bullock’s letter to Hagel and Fox can be found [HERE](#).

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