

August 11, 2021

Dear Governor Gianforte:

We respectfully write as members of the Montana Climate Solutions Council. The Council was directed to provide recommendations and strategies for the State of Montana to reduce carbon pollution, prepare for climate impacts, and develop and commercialize new technologies that will enhance Montana's economic opportunities. The 29 members of the Council are a diverse group of Montanans, representing varied backgrounds, sectors, and interests. The result of our work was and is the [Montana Climate Solutions Plan](#), released in December 2020.

There is urgency in today's letter. Montana's extreme hot temperatures, a statewide drought emergency, wildfires, wildfire smoke, and stress on the electricity grid are all having detrimental effects on human health, our economy, our natural resources, and our pocket books. Montana also faces changing markets and a shifting policy environment stressing Montana's existing businesses and energy systems. Our coal mines continue to lose customers putting good jobs, home mortgages, community services, state and tribal revenue at risk. The issues Montana faces from environmental change, economic restructuring, and a shifting policy landscape underscore the critical nature of the problem and the need to address it.

The Council identified key strategies to accelerate innovation, leverage regional competitive advantages, prepare and build resilience for all Montanans, including State government, address the needs of communities in transition through appropriate economic and workforce development, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Council provided this input via three Committees: Adaptation, Economic Innovation, and Mitigation. The Montana Climate Solutions Plan contains over 50 recommendations for actions. Almost all of these were reached by consensus, with only eight receiving the support of a large majority, but not all, of the Council.

We recognize that your administration is developing its own priorities and solutions. However, the Plan is clear on the need for consistent and clear leadership from the top that supports an "innovation landscape" driving collaboration and partnerships among government, business, education, and NGO communities. Maintaining Montana's position as an energy exporting state and leveraging new business opportunities, will, as described in the Plan, "require new technological approaches to agriculture, energy systems, infrastructure, and carbon mitigation and storage, among others." We encourage you to proceed with the urgency these times demand, including fully engaging with the current federal administration. We also urge you to take advantage of the in-depth analysis and good work that was done by the Council. Even with its diverse membership the Council achieved considerable unanimity in its thinking, a remarkable accomplishment in today's contentious environment.

The Council's recommendations offer common sense, Montana specific steps that we can take to address our changing climate in a manner that produces economic benefits. Many strategies are fiscally neutral and offer myriad co-benefits. Implementing these recommendations will make it

easier for Montana to chart our own course. Given the priorities of the current administration in Washington DC, there will be increased funding opportunities that can dovetail with the implementation of Council recommendations, propelling our state to enhanced economic competitiveness.

The timing is critical. The just released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report adds further urgency to our need to act immediately, as it states in stark terms and with certainty that humans are fueling climate change, and we must act immediately.

Please advance and implement the recommendations contained in the Montana Climate Solutions Plan that are essential today. We hope you are interested in a conversation about addressing the climate issues facing Montana. We are here to help.

Most sincerely,

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