

United States Senate

May 24, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta
Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Perdue and Secretary Acosta:

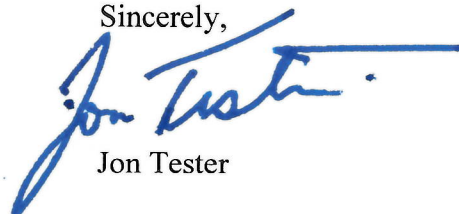
I write to express my strong objections to your irresponsible plans to close successful Job Corps Centers. Make no mistake, this decision will lead to an immediate loss of jobs in rural America and undermine economic development in communities like Anaconda moving forward. The fact that you are announcing this on a Friday before a holiday weekend is even more offensive. I will be working with anyone that will stand up against this decision in hopes of changing your minds.

These Job Corps Centers provide critical resources to USDA and the Forest Service while at the same time providing jobs for hardworking Montanans. I have met people who have been trained to fight wildland fires, complete welding projects in our national parks, and perform heavy machinery maintenance. As I told an official at USDA this morning, I recently met a young woman working at a restaurant who thanked me for supporting Job Corps Centers. She had secured the needed skills for her job at the Anaconda facility which you are in the process of closing. It is unbelievable that you would claim to support economic development in a rural state like Montana while closing down this facility, which has a proven track record of success.

The Anaconda Job Corps Center also supports surrounding communities and provides skilled labor for area employers. People who have completed the welding program have landed jobs at a state of the art aerospace manufacturer. The painting, bricklaying, and carpentry program has expedited local construction of affordable housing. And the heavy construction trade has helped build the next generation of infrastructure projects across Montana.

The magnitude of this decision on a community like Anaconda and the people of Montana is hard to overstate. I urge you to reconsider this irresponsible decision and instead work to create jobs and provide services to the rural west.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester