

United States Senate

July 25, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

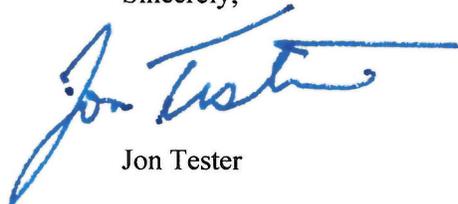
I am writing to request that the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act (S. 1765) be included in a legislative mark up as soon as the Committee's schedule allows. For more than a decade, Montanans have worked hand-in-hand to create a long-term solution for public lands in the Blackfoot River watershed in the Lolo National Forest. This grassroots legislation was crafted by the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Project (BCSP), a coalition of local loggers, ranchers, outfitters, conservationists, snowmobilers, business owners, and outdoor recreationists from the area. Now is the time to move forward with this responsible land management legislation that over 70 percent of Montanans support.

The Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act would enact a multi-use proposal from the collaborative that balances our outdoor recreation economy, timber opportunities, and landscape conservation. This legislation opens up thousands of new acres for snowmobile use, protects thousands of acres of mountain biking terrain, and requires the Forest Service to prioritize its review of future recreational trail proposals from the collaborative. The agency is also required to conduct a forest health assessment that will help identify new timber projects on the landscape. Finally, the bill adds additional acres to the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat wilderness areas to protect some of Montana's most scenic rivers, including the Clearwater and Blackfoot that give the bill its name.

This legislation is good for conservation, and it is good for business. Moving the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act forward will ensure that years of collaborative work from local folks does not go to waste. This legislation received a hearing last Congress, and I encourage you to allow this proposal to continue moving forward by including it in a legislative mark up.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation. I stand ready to work with you to move this Montana-made conservation effort forward in an upcoming mark up.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester