



October 9, 2020

Dr. Steven Dillingham  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Road  
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Dillingham:

We write today about the importance of the 2020 Census and ensuring every Montanan gets counted. Census data is the basis for distributing funding to our schools, highways, hospitals, emergency services and 300 critical programs. It is essential that the U.S. Census Bureau continues field operations until the end of October and meets its Constitutional obligation to get an accurate count.

With a little over a million people, Montana's single seat in the U.S. House of Representatives is the biggest congressional district in the country. After three decades of waiting, the 2020 Census could result in Montana regaining a second representative in Congress, bringing more Montana common sense to Washington. Right now, Montana's response rate lags behind most of the country. That's why we are disappointed with the Trump Administration's efforts to constrict field operations and end the count early.

As the Trump Administration attempts to derail the 2020 Census in our judicial system, it is critical that the U.S. Census Bureau utilizes this last month of field operations to procure an accurate count. The confusion created by the President's legal battle must not result in the U.S. Census Bureau closing operations before the count is complete. That's why we are asking the U.S. Census Bureau to commit to collecting 2020 Census data through October 31, 2020. This last push is key to getting an accurate count in Montana.

In addition, we are concerned about the U.S. Census Bureau's ability to collect, process, and deliver 2020 Census data in the current timeframe. Does the U.S. Census Bureau need an extension on the statutory deadline of December 31, 2020? If the U.S. Census Bureau does not need an extension for data delivery, please indicate how the U.S. Census Bureau plans to complete its obligation in time. We urge you to immediately conduct Tribal consultation on 2020 Census data processing in order to ensure accurate and quality 2020 Census results for Indian Country.

An undercount in Montana will cost Montanans funding and representation for the next ten years. Let us know how we can be of assistance in ensuring every Montanan is counted and meaningful Tribal consultation is undertaken. Please respond by October 15, 2020.

Sincerely,



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Jon Tester  
United States Senator



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Steve Bullock  
Governor of Montana



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Mike Cooney  
Lieutenant Governor,  
Chair of the Montana  
Complete Count  
Committee