

United States Senate

August 11, 2020

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:

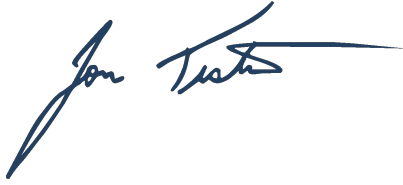
Now that Congress has passed the Great American Outdoors Act, it's critical for us to continue moving the ball forward on collaborative proposals to improve access to our public lands. I am writing you to request a hearing as soon as possible on my Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act. We need to back up our significant financial investment in our public lands with smart, collaborative management proposals for those lands.

The Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act represents the culmination of more than a decade of collaboration between the timber industry, conservation groups, sportsmen, guides and outfitters, mountain bikers, and snowmobilers. This bill secures access to the 2,013-acre Otatsy area for snowmobilers, and ensures permanent access to thousands of acres of mountain biking terrain in the Spread Mountain area. Guides and outfitters will have surety that the remote landscapes they rely on will remain permanently protected with additions to the Bob Marshall, Mission Mountains, and Scapegoat Wilderness areas. Local timber producers stand to benefit from a landscape-scale assessment of forest health and necessary forest restoration projects. Finally, the local collaborative is guaranteed priority review of its future recreational trails proposals on this ranger district. This balanced, collaborative approach to forest management will help permanently protect the landscape and the outdoor economy that thrives on these lands.

The Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act is also a natural next step after Congress has heavily invested in its public lands through the Great American Outdoors Act. Addressing decades of funding shortfalls is important, but we also need to clear our backlog of decades of collaborative land management proposals that don't cost a dime, stimulate the economy, improve access to public lands, and protect our most important landscapes. My legislation does just that.

I applaud you on passage of the historic Great American Outdoors Act, and I stand ready to work with you to advance the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act and other collaborative public land management legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jon Tester". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Jon Tester