

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK  
GOVERNOR



MIKE COONEY  
LT. GOVERNOR

August 27, 2020

The Most Honorable Steve Daines  
United States Senator, State of Montana  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

Your letter to me regarding the draft and as of yet unreleased recommendations of the Montana Climate Solutions Council is not only inappropriate, it undermines the very collaborative processes that are crucial to bridging divides over challenging policy issues in our state and across the nation. It is disrespectful of the work of the council members, and unbecoming of your official office. I am especially disappointed that it harps on one of the few points of disagreement in their work rather than their many points of consensus.

During your tenure in Congress you have avoided townhalls and other discussions with those who disagree with your policies, where as I have consistently brought together diverse citizens from across Montana with a recognition that while we may not agree on everything, many of our values that we hold together can help guide us to commonsense, pragmatic and durable bipartisan policy solutions. I believe those efforts are apparent in the group of individuals selected to serve on this council and their process for working together.

The Montana Climate Solutions Council is planning to issue its final report to myself, the state legislature and the Montana Public Service Commission in the coming weeks. The draft report, as you now know, has many consensus recommendations and a few recommendations advanced with the dissenting views of council members represented. I believe those viewpoints are essential to articulating areas of support and disagreement to inform the state on future policy efforts. Each of the recipients of the report, alongside the University System, businesses and nonprofit partners, will need to determine which elements to implement. I will not, as you suggest in your letter to me, censure their work or recommendations. I will however give careful consideration to how best to implement the package I receive.

Of note, the recommendation that appears to have caused you so much concern, reads: "Engage in National and Regional Dialogues Regarding Carbon Pricing." It does not recommend a specific policy action or alternative, but does recognize that carbon pricing may have impacts on Montana's economy, both positive and negative.

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I believe we need to better understand those issues so we can assure any policy, regional or national, is attentive to our state's needs. The report also covers recommendations spanning preparedness, clean energy, workforce and community economic development, research and innovation and other areas that reflect bipartisan consensus.

Although it may be campaign season, your attack on me and my office also attacks the work of this council. On its face I read it as a reprehensible display of politics, indicative of your limited capacity to tackle a challenging issue facing our state and our nation, and unfortunately, unsurprisingly consistent with your tenure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Bullock", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

STEVE BULLOCK  
Governor