

Ravalli County Commissioners  
215 S 4<sup>TH</sup> Street  
Hamilton, MT 59840

September 12, 2022

Dear County Commissioners;

The Open Lands Board is currently processing and presenting to you the Sweathouse Creek Project which is more locally known to us in Victor as the Hackett Ranch for Conservation Easement. We would like your support for this valuable project on the Westside above Victor. The Hackett Ranch is a working cattle ranch that not only provides and maintains the agricultural integrity of our valley. It also provides many outdoor recreation opportunities with access for hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching. Since it borders the Bitterroot National Forest this Conservation Easement would provide valuable access from the valley to the Forest. It is a beautiful scenic open space which can be clearly seen from Highway 93 being only 3 miles from Victor.

I think it is also important to point out that Scott Hackett is the last of the Hackett generation. It is important to provide some sort of security to the valley that this large parcel of land will be preserved into the future in its present state and not subdivided. I am not really positive that folks have considered that when the Hacketts are gone there is a high likelihood without this protection that instead of a beautiful hay field and meadows the view from the valley may be drastically different with subdivided lands and multiple houses. With the easement in place at least we can guarantee that the future generations of children in the valley will be able to view the mountains and recreate on the west side above Victor.

Conservation Easements are extremely valuable in today's world and the influx of growth in our local valley. It is only with multiple organizations and your support that this project can be accomplished. Please approve this valuable conservation easement to protect the values of our beautiful Bitterroot Valley that we have all come to appreciate. Please provide your support to the Sweathouse Creek Project / Hackett Ranch.

Thank you

*Roylene and Bruce Gaul*

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