

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2600

December 18, 2014

Ravalli County Commission
215 S. 4th Street Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear Commission:

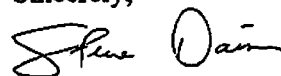
As a fifth generation Montanan and an incoming member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I am committed to finding solutions that restore active management to our national forests. The status quo is unacceptable and detrimental to forest health, wildfire conditions, habitat, recreational access, and our once-vibrant timber economy alike.

It is imperative that forest reform legislation improve conditions in all ten of Montana's national forests, create good-paying jobs in our timber industry, improve recreational access, and fulfill the federal government's century-old promise to our forested counties to provide sustainable revenues for their schools and roads. Earlier this year, Congress took an important step in the right direction by passing reforms in the *Farm Bill* to expedite collaborative-based projects on Forest Service lands suffering from insect infestation. However, much more needs to be done to address the systemic challenges facing federal forests in Montana and increase responsible timber harvests on nonreserved lands.

I believe Montanans are best positioned to develop sensible reforms to the federal policies that directly impact them. I therefore kindly request your thoughts on what specifically Congress should do to restore active land management in our national forests. As part of your input, I request your thoughts on potential reforms to provide timely environmental reviews of timber projects, reduce obstructive appeals and litigation, and set clear harvest targets for the Forest Service to meet while giving the agency the latitude to do so. Because I plan to promptly provide recommendations to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I request your written response by January 15, 2015.

Thank you in advance for your feedback, and I look forward to working closely with you and other Montanans on this and other important issues to our state. Please email your formal written responses to my staff member, Meghan Marino, at Meghan.Marino@mail.house.gov or Meghan_Marino@Daines.Senate.gov, active January 5, 2015.

Sincerely,



STEVE DAINES
Member of Congress (MT)