

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 19, 2022

Acting State Director Theresa Hanley
Bureau of Land Management
Montana-Dakotas Office
5001 Southgate Drive
Billings, MT 59101

Regional Forester Leanne Marten
U.S. Forest Service
Northern Region
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Missoula, MT 59804

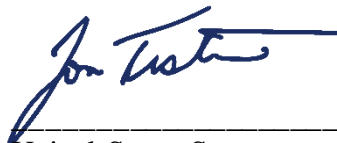
Dear State Director Hanley and Regional Forester Marten:

We want to begin by thanking you for your ongoing efforts to assist Montana communities in responding and recovering from the recent catastrophic flooding. We are grateful for the steps you have already taken to collaborate with Montana outfitters and guides on solutions to minimize disruptions this season. We are writing to urge you to continue assisting guides, outfitters, and other members of affected communities in finding alternative options to operate on public lands. As the summer season continues, it is critical to the viability of many of the region's small businesses that Montana remains open to visitors seeking outdoor recreation on our public lands. The Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service must maximize flexibilities with permit administration in order to provide alternative options, particularly for those displaced from Yellowstone National Park.

Montana's outdoor recreation economy supports tens of thousands of jobs across the state. The cornerstone of that economy is opportunities to recreate on public lands. The flooding on the Yellowstone River has cut off Montana communities and businesses from Yellowstone National Park just as the height of the summer season begins. To avoid severe economic damage to these rural communities and small businesses, Forest Service and Department of Interior must collaborate with local stakeholders to ensure affected outfitting and guiding operations have access to alternative options to allow their customers to recreate on nearby public lands. Additionally, we request current closures are not extended beyond what is necessary.

We urge you to bring any relevant authority you have to bear to identify recreation options on public lands in the area, apply flexibilities to permit administration, and to expedite any necessary permitting for businesses affected by the recent flooding on the Yellowstone. Without other options, these businesses could face significant cancellations during the most important part of their year, just as the communities they live in attempt to rebuild after this historic flood. We stand ready and willing to partner with you in order to avert that disaster.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue and for your commitment to serving Montana communities during this time.



United States Senator



United States Senator



Member of Congress