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March 22, 2021

Dear Chairman Jones and the House Appropriations Committee:

On behalf of the members of the Montana Economic Developers Association (MEDA) we are writing to ask for funding to support a significant and sustainable investment in the future of Montana's economy through the economic development organizations across Montana. Our goal is to help all of our businesses and communities succeed through local assistance, and to quickly recover from the difficulties of the past year.

Our organizations are prepared to partner with the state and private industry, to bring resources to businesses and communities for long term sustainable economic growth. We offer our services to deploy funds throughout Montana from the smallest of towns to our large cities, and everywhere in between. We ask that our Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) receive funds for revolving loan funds, equity investment opportunities, business assistance and revitalization. We offer a simple solution to use the network of experienced economic developers and an existing mechanism to administer these funds with transparency and accountability. We have a proven track record of building our economies, creating new jobs and want to be part of securing Montana's future as a national leader in economic growth.

MEDA members are on the ground working in communities from Eureka to Ekalaka, to address the challenges experienced over the past year. We are passionate about supporting public/private partnerships to help Montana live up to our great potential and understand that each of our communities have unique needs. We have met with local leaders and statewide decision makers to develop a recommendation based on feedback and our collective experience as economic development professionals. Based upon our discussions, we will work with our counties, cities, towns and communities, focusing on the following, as well as continuing our work on broadband and traditional infrastructure:

- Support for Main Street Businesses and Sustainable Redevelopment
- Investment in Workforce Recruitment and Retention
- Increase Value Added Agriculture and Food Security
- Grow our Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

The members of MEDA and our partners throughout the state are excited to work with our legislators, state agencies, local community leaders, and the Governor's Office, to execute these critical strategies. We are the partner and on the ground resource to provide grassroots business services and assistance, to deploy the recovery dollars. Thank you for your time and consideration, we look forward to meeting with the legislative leadership and the Governor's team to lead Montana's Comeback.

Signed by the MEDA Board,



Brian Obert  
Montana Business Assistance Connection



Joe Willauer, Butte Local Development  
and Headwaters RC&D



Steve Arveschoug  
Big Sky Economic Development Authority



Rick Edwards  
NorthWestern Energy



Sarah Converse  
Sweetgrass Development



Tracy McIntyre  
Montana Cooperative Development Center



Paddy Fleming  
Montana Manufacturing Extension Center



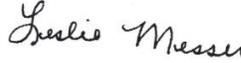
Russ Fletcher  
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Brett Doney  
Great Falls Development Authority

Jerry Meerkatz

*Christy Cummings Dawson*  
Montana West Economic Development  
Flathead Co Economic Development



Leslie Messer  
Richland County Economic Development



Paul Reichert  
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Beth Epley  
Eastern Plains Economic Development



Kathie Bailey  
Snowy Mountain Development Corp.



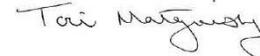
Christ Cerquone, Newfields



Tim Guardipee  
Native American Development Corp.



Craig Erickson  
Great West Engineering



Tori Matejovsky  
Great Northern Development Corp.



Toni Schneider, Cushing Terrell



Marie Hirsch  
Arlee Community Development Corp.



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