

Glenda Wiles

From: Tim Peterson <peterson.timothy.s@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 14, 2018 4:28 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office; Michelle McConnaha; Sen. Steve Daines
Subject: Fwd: next steps after last week's Ravalli County Commission meeting

Commissioners,

There is clearly a divide amongst the residents of Ravalli County concerning Senator Daines' bill and your letter of support for lifting the WSA status for the two Wilderness Study Areas in Ravalli County. I urge you to recognize the divide in a letter to Senator Daines and your constituents. It is time for a collaborative process that re-evaluates the character of the areas and recommends a common sense plan for their future.

Thank you,

Tim Peterson
1686 Highlander Way
Corvallis, MT 5828

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Montana Wilderness Association** <mwa@wildmontana.org>
Date: Wed, Feb 14, 2018 at 3:10 PM
Subject: next steps after last week's Ravalli County Commission meeting
To: Tim@tppeterson.us



About 250 people showed up last week to the Ravalli County Commission meeting on Sen. Daines' WSA bill

Hi Tim,

Last week, the Ravalli County commission held an open meeting to hear testimony on Senator Steve Daines' S. 2206, a bill that strips protection from five wilderness study areas, nearly a half-million acres in all, including two areas in your backyard – the Blue Joint and Sapphire. The meeting started an hour or so after Sen. Daines testified on his bill in the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

We asked our members and supporters in Ravalli County to show up the commission meeting.

And show up you did.

At least 250 people flooded the county commission meeting, forcing the commission to move the meeting to the fairgrounds.

A staggering 153 people signed in as opposed to Senator Daines' bill, only 41 in support. Over the course of the next few hours, 52 people testified against the bill, 20 in favor. Moreover, 78 people sent the commission emails opposing the bill, compared to 20 in favor.

Unfortunately, the commission decided not to rescind a letter it sent Sen. Daines last year supporting the removal of protection from the Blue Joint and Sapphire, a letter that Sen. Daines touts as local support for his bill.

But this meeting was not a loss for us. It was a win.

It was a win because we showed resoundingly that this bill does not have local support. On a day when Sen. Daines should have been basking in positive press about his successful Senate hearing, instead he was faced with article after article citing the tremendous local opposition to this bill in Ravalli County.

Now, Ravalli County Commissioner Greg Chilcott is claiming that the commission decided not to rescind its letter because most of the people who testified at the meeting were from outside the county. He said this on Tuesday in Billings during a meeting of the Montana Association of Counties (MACo).

Commissioner Chilcott is wrong about those who testified. We know this because we checked the numbers:

- 58 of the 72 people (80 percent) who testified live in Ravalli County.
- Of the 58 Ravalli County residents who testified, 42 (72 percent) of them were opposed to the bill and 16 (28 percent) were for it. That same ratio, 72-28 percent, holds true for all who testified.
- Of the 52 people who testified against Sen. Daines' bill, 42 (80 percent) live in Ravalli County.
- Of the 20 people who testified in favor of the bill, 16 (80 percent, the same as above) live in Ravalli County.

Even if Commissioner Chilcott were right, we believe that all Montanans – indeed all Americans – have the right to speak up on behalf of American public lands, no matter where we live.

So, what can you do now?

First, you can call Commissioner Chilcott at [\(406\) 375-6502](tel:4063756502) or email him at gchilcott@rc.mt.gov and let him know you oppose Sen. Daines' WSA bill and take umbrage with him claiming that the the commission meeting was stacked with people from outside the county. Be sure to mention that you are a resident of Ravalli County. If you're feeling especially ambitious, contact all of the [Ravalli County commissioners](#).

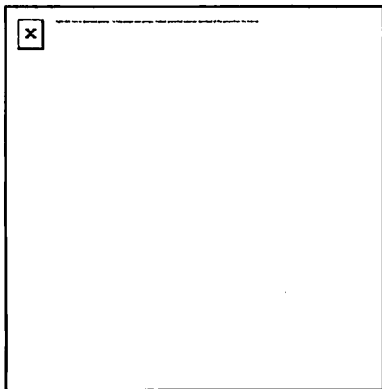
Next, write a letter-to-the-editor expressing how you feel that the county commission held a public meeting, heard overwhelming opposition to its position on Sen. Daines' bill, and decided to ignore what they heard. Feel free to cite the number of people who opposed Sen. Daines' bill versus those who supported the bill at the county commission meeting.

Submit your letters-to-the-editor to [the Ravalli Republic](#), [the Bitterroot Star](#), and [the Missoulian](#).

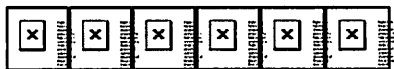
And if you haven't done so already, sign the open letter at ourlandourlegacy.org urging our congressional delegation to take a balanced, bipartisan, and inclusive approach to the long-term management of Montana's wilderness study areas.

Again, I can't thank you enough for showing and speaking up for our wildest and most pristine places. It's because of your passion and courage that I believe we can defeat Sen. Daines' WSA bill.

- Kayje Booker, MWA state policy director



Connect with Us



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