

1171 Ambrose Creek Rd
Stevensville MT 59870
June, 14, 2018

To Ravalli County Commissioners:

Dear Sirs:

This letter is regarding your decision to contract for a study into the impact of Forest Service land management policies on the Ravalli county economy with the University of Montana.

Mr. Burrows comments " our best bet is to go after economic and social issue..if we could show we would have sawmills here if the loggers hadn't been shut out of the forest, that would be important". Mr. Hoffman pointed out timber harvest from private ground needed to be considered...and was having a hard time justifying the \$16,000 price tag...but we need a policy that they can't ignore... "I'm curious how they get to \$16,000 when they have already done the research" said Mr. Chilcott.

Mr. Burrows said U of M analysis that shows the timber industry could have been viable, if not for environmental policy ... flies in the face of what he heard was that the timber industry was dying anyway and being replaced by recreation. He also stated that he was seeking a comparison of the recreation and service industry to the wood product industry, but the contractor couldn't do this.

I find a complete lack of clear objectives presented by the Ravalli County Commissioners for this contract. You are just accepting what the contractor can offer, vs a broader look at private, and state and federal timber land utilization history, and or actually looking at all NFS Land management policies, mandates, resources and uses.

The research plan states a Hypothetical Timber availability scenario, using BEER's computer model, will be highlighted. Will this scenario take into consideration sustained, perpetual timber harvest? Or NFS will land look like Plum Creek's private land and be barren of mature trees for several decades? Will it take into consideration the multiple use mandate (not highest quickest monetary return you may be looking for) the NFS are managed under?

I object to Ravalli county spending \$16,783 on this short sighted, narrowly scoped (timber availability) sponsored research agreement contract. Surely there are other higher needs for funding in our county.

This letter is a summary of my concerns, please let me know that you received my comments.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Ballard