

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Steve Bullock, Governor of Montana
Montana Office for the Governor

Dear Governor Bullock,

We write to you today with a plea for relief. Our small businesses are located on the eastern side of Glacier National Park, within the exterior boundaries of the Blackfeet Reservation. As you are no doubt aware, the Tribal Council, County Health Department, and Park Service have closed access to the east side of the park and shuttered or severely restricted the businesses here from the St. Mary Valley to the East Glacier area. We fully support the tribe's actions to protect its people.

We write to you in the hope that you will consider the plight of small businesses here in our community. We are not writing to demand the Park open, nor to contradict the Tribe's coronavirus directives. We are in a different situation than any other group of businesses in the state. We appreciate your full support of the tribe's measures to protect the residents of the Blackfeet Reservation, and hope that you will also fully support the businesses that bear the direct economic weight of those decisions. The east side closure directly impacts our ability to make an income, pay our bills, and raise our families. The existing relief programs are not tailored to our unique situation.

We have been informed individually by Bureau of Business Assistance Chief Wayne Johnston that the Department of Commerce fully understands our situation, and finds us to be collectively in no different a position than any other group of businesses in the state. To the contrary, we argue that local lodging facilities are the only entities in the state required to close their doors regardless of their ability to comply with social distancing and other COVID-19 health directives, and few other businesses can operate viably with all lodging closed and tourists unable to enter the area. We have built our businesses to get through hard times- late openings of the Sun Road, horrible forest fires, limited travel due to international events- but no business is built to survive over a year with zero income.

We are asking you to consider the future of lodging and hospitality here on the east side. We have lost an entire year's income in the span of a few weeks, with not much hope that next year will be better. We are stressed- financially, mentally, emotionally. We may lose everything. We are passionate about the businesses we have built from the ground up.

We ask that you consider the specific conditions of the businesses here on the east side of Glacier Park in any future relief packages you may be deliberating. We are not asking to be made whole- we don't expect the people of Montana to pay us not to work, even as we scramble to pick up essential jobs to make ends meet. We are an independent bunch- you have to be to make it through the winters here. The undersigned specifically request that your office consider either a new Coronavirus relief package tailored towards relieving the economic impact of the east side closure, or the opportunity for such businesses to re-apply for existing applicable grants in a fashion that reflects the current and ongoing situation.

The Coronavirus Relief Council and its advisory members make repeated mentions of the necessity of "jump-starting" the tourism industry. If tourism is the economic engine of our state, then surely the east side of Glacier Park is one of the spark plugs keeping things firing on time. Governor, we are stalled out. The Council advocated for the Governor's office to provide direct assistance to Montana tourism and hospitality businesses "with priority given to businesses that are subject to continued

closure, have businesses focused on accommodating in-state and out-of-state tourists, and have been (and will continue to be) most negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic." The Council's very first guiding principle is to "focus on those impacted most." That's us. We trust that we have your support.

Respectfully,

The Hospitality and Tourism Businesses of the East Side of Glacier Park

Claire, Sanford, and John Stone Park Cabin Company	Colleen O'Brien and Mark Howser Glacier Park Trading Company Two Medicine Grill Whistling Swan Motel Rock N Roll Bakery Cozy Cabin
Bob and Charlene Burns Cattle Baron Supper Club Single Shot Vacation Rentals	Ryan Sherburne Mountain Pine Motel
Terri Ocheltree Duck Lake Lodge	Jason Andreas Glacier Mountain Retreat
Sally Black Welder The Cottages at Glacier	Bob and Diane Scalese Travelers Rest Lodge
Barbara Paul Paul Ranch Montana	Susan May and Erik Digby Jacobson's Cottages
Beth & Susan Higgins and John Cunningham Two Sisters Cafe	Leslie and Carl Haggar Lone Elk Lodge
Gary Rodgers Pursuit, Glacier Park Collection	Wendy Gates East Glacier Home Away
Jennie Walter Rising Sun Pizza	Stefanie and Jeff Zarycki Serranos Mexican Restaurant
Veronica Kempfort	Colleen and Lindy Jones

Divide Creek Campground	Timber Frame Guest Homes
Deb and Mike Thronson Thronson's Motel, General Store, and Cafe	Beth Hagan Heartbutte House
David and JJ Walburn Montana Songwriter StoneHouse at Duck Lake	Aaron and Jennifer Burleson Burleson Vacation Rental
Tammy Ray Red Eagle Motel	Chelsea and Nate Mikle Hiker's Haven
Jackie and Steve Conway Red Eagle Motel	Dana Turvey John L. Clarke Gallery
Nathan St. Goddard Johnson's of St. Mary Cafe & Campground	Aaron Schauf Bison Creek Ranch