



# ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

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JOE KOLMAN, Legislative Environmental Analyst

April, 2014

, Chair  
County Commission  
Street  
Town, MT ZIP

Dear Chair,

A working group of the Environmental Quality Council, a bipartisan interim committee of the Legislature, is asking counties in Montana to identify specific projects on federal land in need of forest restoration.

Gov. Steve Bullock recently identified to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture more than 5 million acres of general forest landscapes affected by insects and disease. Pursuant to the Agriculture Act of 2014, commonly referred to as the Farm Bill, the secretary may designate projects within those landscapes for prioritized forest management and restoration.

Enclosed is the news release from the governor and a map showing the nominated landscapes.

The governor did not identify specific forest projects. Four members of the Environmental Quality Council working on a federal land management study are seeking information from counties on specific projects in need of forest restoration. Please focus the list of specific projects on areas characterized by declining forest health, a risk of substantially increased tree mortality, or an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety.

This request is related to the survey sent last year to selected counties pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 15, passed by the 2013 Legislature for a study evaluating the management of certain federal lands in Montana, assessing risks, and identifying solutions. The SJ 15 work group is chaired by Sen. Jennifer Fielder and includes Sen. Brad Hamlett and Reps. Ed Lieser and Kerry White.

The EQC is nearing the end of the SJ 15 study. Please provide a list of forest restoration projects by May 9, 2014. Attach any supplemental explanations, comments, suggestions, or other information your board finds pertinent.

Enclosed are survey results to date, and a study matrix developed by the work group. Please

review the study matrix and respond by email or mail as soon as possible with comments or additional items for SJ 15 work group to consider.

Please return the project list or comments to:

jkolman@mt.gov

Subject Line: County Projects

Or mail to:

Environmental Quality Council

ATTN: Joe Kolman, County Projects

Room 171B, Capitol Building

P.O. Box 201704

Helena, MT 59620-1704

More information about the EQC and the study can be found here:

<http://leg.mt.gov/css/Committees/Interim/2013-2014/EQC/default.asp>

If you have questions or would like more information please contact Joe Kolman, staff for the EQC, at (406) 444-3747 or jkolman@mt.gov or Sen. Jennifer Fielder, the sponsor of SJ15, at (406) 210-5944 or by email at Sen.JFielder@legmt.gov

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Joe Kolman

EQC staff

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