



BIG SKY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

April 24, 2020

Governor Steve Bullock
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Delivered via email
governor@mt.gov

Dear Governor Bullock:

The Big Sky Owners Association is a non-profit corporation registered with the State of Montana. Its purpose is to maintain common areas within the unincorporated village of Big Sky, Montana and to govern relevant portions of the home owner community. Our organization represents 2700 property interests. Forty-seven per cent of the entities that own these properties are located in Montana.

It is estimated that the permanent population of Big Sky is somewhere between three and four thousand. During peak seasons this number (including visitors and employees) may exceed twenty thousand. That would make Big Sky the 6th largest population center in Montana. Our population is expected to grow significantly. Currently, over two billion dollars of expansion is underway or has been completed. Northwestern Energy is also upgrading our electric service in Big Sky from 60KV to 160KV because they are planning on the electric demand to double in Big Sky in the next 10 years.

Our membership is concerned that in an emergency situation, such as an earthquake, forest fire or terrorist event, an orderly evacuation of 20,000 individuals might not be possible, particularly if US 191 were to be interdicted. Big Sky lies within 30 miles of the devastating earthquake that ended the lives of 28 vacationers in the Madison Canyon sixty years ago.

Big Sky is unique among Montana's population centers. It is without a local government and lies in two disparate counties. There is no precedent or authorized legal structure for the two counties to jointly create and/or administer a single, coordinated evacuation plan for our community. As a result, we have no plan in writing and only anecdotal speculation concerning the use and capacity of our only alternative escape route, the Jack Creek Road. We also have no plan for "sheltering in place".

We believe that the State of Montana should be reminded that Big Sky was a joint creation of the State and private interests in the early 1970's. To facilitate development, the State allowed the resort to use its patented sobriquet "Big Sky", and planned and constructed a Federal-aid Primary Highway to connect US Highways 287 and 191. This planned Highway, Montana 64, provided Big Sky with a viable alternate evacuation route. That the planned extension of MT 64 to Ennis was abandoned in 1993 in favor of private interests (apparently without hearings or public notification) remains a mystery to many of our members.

It should be obvious that Big Sky has a serious potential public safety issue that transcends the capabilities and authority of our respective counties.

We are requesting a meeting with you at your earliest convenience. The current pandemic should serve as an urgent reminder of the consequences of ignoring potential disasters. Please contact Suzan Scott, (406) 995-4166, our Executive Director, to arrange a time and location.

Yours Truly,



Eric Ossorio, BSOA Chairman

Cc: Gallatin County Commissioners; Madison County Commissioners; Madison County Planning Dept; Big Sky Fire Dept; Gallatin and Madison County Sheriff's Dept; Big Sky Resort Area District; Moonlight Basin; Taylor Middleton; State Representatives Kerry White, Zack Brown, Ray Shaw; State Senators Pat Flowers, Jeffrey Welborn, Gordon Vance and JP Pomnichowski; Big Sky Chamber of Commerce; State Transportation Advisory Committee; Mayor Blake Leavitt.