February 21, 2019

Madison County Commissioners Delivered via email

P.O. Box 278 madco@madisoncountymt.gov

Virginia City, MT 59755

Dear Madison County Commissioners:

As a result of an October, 2017 letter, several BSOA representatives met with Madison County Commissioners to discuss funding for improvements to the Jack Creek Road for a secondary emergency access and evacuation route for the Big Sky community. At the meeting on April, 2018, there was agreement by all that Jack Creek Road is conspicuously inadequate for an emergency evacuation and that several steps were to be taken to resolve the issue, including (a) a survey of the 3-mile unimproved, narrow stretch to determine the road right of ways and adequacy as a County Standard Roadway. The timeline for the survey was to be completed in May or June, 2018; (b) acknowledgement that a new Feasibility Study was unnecessary, but an enhanced or updated study was to be completed to determine what improvements are needed to the roadway for reasonable emergency access/egress and; (c) an estimate of costs associated with a 3-year plan to resolve the emergency access and evacuation was also settled upon. Items b and c were to be completed within a reasonable time after the survey was done. Furthermore, the Madison County Commissioners unanimously expressed desire for something to be done, understood the need for action and recognized the benefit it would have for their Big Sky constituents. Since that time, the BSOA has sent two additional letters requesting the action above. As of December 5th, the BSOA was informed of a preliminary analysis that was completed, however further research and a full review of the Road documents is needed but not yet performed, nor has a survey been completed.

With approximately 2,500 commuters and 1,000 visitors daily to this area and nearly 3,000 Big Sky full-time residents, the BSOA Board remains very concerned about evacuating a population of this size out the existing two-lane Gallatin County roads, Highway 64 and 191. Our Board is further concerned by Madison County Commissioner’s lack of urgency and insufficient progress on an emergency access, particularly considering their continued approval of development in the Big Sky area where roadways, public services and emergency response teams are already overburdened and congested. In awareness of the recent devastating Camp Fire in Paradise California, a suitable secondary emergency access and evacuation route is paramount for the safety of the commuters, visitors and residents of Big Sky.

Approximately 56% of the 2,400 BSOA members are residents or property owners in Madison County. Madison County receives 75% of its revenue from the Big Sky area, yet appropriates only 25% of its budget back into our community for services. It is a County’s obligation to provide sufficient funds to ensure public safety for its citizens, which includes proper evacuation routes. Yet the Madison County Commissioners continue to stall on this issue regardless of your willingness to approve new subdivisions.

Recognizing that a survey may not be possible to complete in the winter months, the BSOA Board requests without further delay, the above research and review of the road documents be completed and results submitted by March, 2019, with confirmation of a completed survey to be received as soon as weather permits but no later than June 30, 2019. In addition, we request that Madison County Commissioners provide the updated feasibility study and cost estimates to the BSOA by September 30, 2019.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary Walton, Chairman, Board of Directors

Big Sky Owners Association

cc’d to: Madison County Commissioners

 Gallatin County Commissioners

 Big Sky Fire Dept.

 Big Sky Sheriff

 Steve Bullock, Governor of Montana

 Ray Shaw, State Legislator, HD 71

 Big Sky Resort Area District