



October 29, 2020

Congressman Greg Gianforte, Candidate for Governor
Lieutenant Governor Mike Cooney, Candidate for Governor
Mr. Lyman Bishop, Candidate for Governor

Delivered via email.

Dear Congressman Gianforte, Lieutenant Governor Cooney and Mr. Bishop:

One of you will be entrusted with the high honor of serving as Montana's next governor, and we are certain all three of you are following this week's troubling news out of Meagher County about an elk-hunting incident that raises more questions than answers.

According to the *Helena Independent-Record*, a large group of hunters fired into a herd of elk, killing about 50 publicly owned animals, leaving evidence to suggest an unknown number of other animals were wounded. The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) reports it only issued six citations—all of them serious offenses that have rightly outraged Montana's hunting community.

As strong supporters of Montana's public lands and the outdoor traditions they support, we of course take no issue with responsible, regulated, ethical hunting. Whatever happened on the evening of Sunday, October 25, appears to be exactly the opposite.

Montana's next governor must prioritize adequate and sufficient funding for FWP's law enforcement officers to maintain Montana's laws and strict codes of traditional hunting ethics, and to bring justice to violators. Simply put: We need more cops on the beat, especially as out-of-state visitors flock to Montana to enjoy our public lands.

The mission of the Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund includes engaging all Montanans and their communities through "education, mobilization and the power of grassroots advocacy." To that end, we will be urging our members, our fellow hunters and our elected leaders to take real action to limit absurd incidents like this, to hold all violators accountable, and to ensure swift justice.

Thank you for your interest in serving the people of Montana, and thank you in advance for taking this incident seriously. We look forward to a response from whomever voters elect on November 3.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Aaron Murphy".

Aaron Murphy
Executive Director
The Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund

P.O. Box 853
Billings, MT 59103
406.254.1593 p

www.mcvedfund.org