



Montana Association of Oil, Gas, & Coal Counties

Representing Big Horn, Beaverhead, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Liberty, Madison, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wibaux, and Yellowstone

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Contact MAOGCC

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November 7, 2025

The Honorable Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tim Sheehy
Dirksen Senate Office Building SD-G55
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
512 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Troy Downing
1529 Longworth House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Crow Revenue Act (H.R. 725, S. 239)

Dear Senator Daines, Senator Sheehy, Congressman Zinke, and Congressman Downing:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Montana Association of Oil, Gas, and Coal Counties (MAOGCC), which is a coalition of Montana's energy-producing counties formed to ensure that local governments have a strong voice in matters of natural resource policy, taxation, and revenue distribution.

Our member counties consist of 33 of the state's 56 counties and predominantly includes those counties that are home to the oil, gas, and coal development that fuels Montana's economy and that, in turn, our counties depend on to support critical infrastructure, law enforcement, and other essential services. MAOGCC works to promote natural resource industry growth to protect these revenue streams and the jobs they provide, and advocate for fair and equitable fiscal policy that balances the needs of industry and local residential property taxpayers.

We extend our sincere appreciation for your continued leadership in support of Signal Peak Energy's Bull Mountains Mine in Roundup, Montana and your sustained efforts to ensure the mine's ongoing operation. The mine is a critical component of Montana's energy economy and the importance of the direct employment it provides, as well as its significant contributions to the federal, state, and local tax base, cannot be overstated.

We recognize and commend your work to safeguard its future.

We write, however, to respectfully express concern regarding the Crow Revenue Act (H.R. 725 and S. 239) as currently drafted. While we fully understand and support the principle of mitigating risks to the mines' future by transferring the federal coal tracts listed within the Crow Revenue Act to private ownership, the language as it currently stands would prevent Musselshell County from receiving any future federal mineral royalty revenue from the coal tracts included in H.R. 725 and S. 239—creating significant and adverse fiscal consequences at the local government level with no revenue replacement contemplated in the current bill language.

Under current law, Musselshell County receives a portion of the federal mineral royalty revenues attributable to coal production at the Bull Mountains Mine through the distribution formula established by the Mineral Leasing Act (MLA), 30 U.S.C. § 191. The MLA provides:

- 50 percent of mineral royalties are paid to the State of Montana;
- 40 percent are deposited into the federal Reclamation Fund; and
- 10 percent are deposited into the U.S. Treasury.

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Montana law, in turn, requires that the State distribute 25% of its share to local governments in producing counties, including Musselshell County. These revenues are an essential component of Musselshell County's budget, supporting public infrastructure, law enforcement, and other core services.

If the Crow Revenue Act is passed in its current form, Musselshell County would completely lose these revenues, as the bill does not provide for the direction of any payments to the state to then be passed on to the county in lieu of the federal mineral royalty payments that will be lost with the passage of the Crow Revenue Act. The effect would be either an increased burden on local property taxpayers or a reduction in essential county services.

While we acknowledge that Musselshell County is not the only beneficiary of these funds that would be impacted by a revenue decrease, the county is disproportionately impacted when compared to the federal government or the State of Montana. Both the state and federal government have larger budgets and more diverse revenue streams, enabling them to more effectively absorb the loss of federal mineral royalty revenues resulting from this bill.

We also acknowledge that MAOGCC has previously supported similar legislative efforts, under a prior administration, when the continued operation of the Bull Mountains Mine was in question and immediate congressional action appeared necessary. Under those circumstances, we determined that advancing the legislation—even with imperfections—was the prudent course to mitigate the risk of mine closure. However, thanks to your office's work to approve the mine expansion plan and the current administration's regulatory posture, we believe there is now both the time and the opportunity to pursue a measured and equitable solution that ensures Musselshell County continues to receive the revenue it needs to serve the Roundup community.

We respectfully request your consideration of an amendment to the Crow Revenue Act to include Musselshell County in the revenue sharing agreement delineated in Section 3(d) by inserting language designating that the county receive an amount comparable to the federal

mineral royalty revenue they would have received, based on the amount of coal that is eventually produced from the tracts listed as part of the transfer.

MAOGCC remains committed to collaborating with you, your staff, and all stakeholders to develop legislative language that achieves these objectives. We appreciate your continued advocacy in support of Montana's energy industries and your steadfast support of our energy-producing communities.

Respectfully,

Phillips County Commissioner Richard Dunbar, Chair
Montana Association of Oil, Gas, and Coal Counties