



March 21, 2020

Ms. Rebecca Harbage
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Ms. Harbage,

The mill manufacturing members of the Montana Wood Products Association would like to thank-you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft Montana Climate Solutions Plan.

The MWPA represents Montana's industrial timberland owners and our primary and secondary wood manufacturers. Montana's wood manufacturing industry continues to be Montana's largest manufacturing sector, employing over 7500 people and providing approximately one billion in primary and secondary sales annually.

With over 23 million acres of forested lands in Montana, our timber industry continues to provide key forest management activities that maintain air and water quality, improve wildlife habitat, and produce wood products and services vital to a strong forest products economy. It is very important that any plan does not jeopardize key forest health and economic components that maintain:

- tree growth and stand structure, composition, and function
- resiliency to disturbance from fire, windthrow, insects and diseases, drought, and management
- diversity of tree species and age classes that support a diverse array of plants and animals
- clean air and water, biodiversity, critical habitat, and recreation opportunities, and
- critical forest products infrastructure and employment opportunities

Therefore, we are concerned that the draft Climate Solutions Plan for Montana undermines current management efforts that seek to manage to a desired future condition and are often collaboratively developed. Burdening management regimes with layers of new regulations or bureaucratic programs only serves to stifle efforts to improve forest health, creates uncertainty, and will come at a cost to the Montana taxpayer.

Thank you for your consideration,

Julia Altemus

Julia Altemus
Executive Director