To: Montana State Board of Land Commissioners
Governor Greg Gianforte
Attorney General Austin Knudsen
Secretary of State Christi Jacobsen
State Auditor James Brown
Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Hedalen

Re: Montana Great Outdoors Working Forest Easement - Phase 2
Expression of Sportsman, Landowner, & Outfitter Support

Dear Members of the Montana Land Board,

On behalf of the thousands of hunters, anglers, trappers, and landowners our organizations represent, we write to express our strong support for the Montana Great Outdoors Working Forest Easement – Phase 2, a project that will support private property interest in thoughtfully managing critical forestlands while supporting local communities and outdoor recreational opportunities.

This project will allow private owners to keep 52,930 acres of working timberlands in commercial operation for generations to come in Flathead and Lincoln Counties. Just as with Phase 1—approved by this Commission in 2024 and successfully closed earlier this calendar year—Phase 2 strikes the right balance by keeping these lands in private ownership and active timber production while guaranteeing long-term public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, and other recreational uses. The property currently hosts approximately 10,000 recreational visitors each year, and this voluntary agreement sought by Green Diamond Resource Company with the State will maintain these opportunities for the public.

The working forest easement delivers substantial economic benefits across the region. Lands under this project are projected to sustain harvest levels sufficient to support dozens of full-time and seasonal forestry jobs, generate significant annual economic activity around support services and recreational activities connected with the land, and provide a steady, long-term timber supply for local and regional mills for the life of the easement. Combined with more than 300,000 acres already conserved under Forest Legacy Program working forest easements in Montana, Phase 2 strengthens the fiber supply chain that underpins timber jobs, logging operations, and milling capacity across northwest Montana. Additionally, the exemplary stewardship by Green Diamond promotes healthier, more resilient forests better able to withstand extreme wildfires, thereby reducing potential future fire suppression costs.

Our interests are also served through the stewardship of productive wildlife habitat and movement corridors that support Montana's most valued game species, including moose,

elk, mule deer, white-tailed deer, and black bear. By keeping these working forests intact and connected, the project helps sustain the healthy wildlife populations that drive hunting, outfitting, and tourism in northwest Montana. Strong wildlife numbers mean more opportunity for sportsmen, more business for guides and outfitters, and more spending in local communities that rely on a consistent flow of recreation and tourism dollars.

Finally, this working forest easement delivers these outcomes while maintaining the county tax base and preserving third-party mineral rights, ensuring that benefits extend to both local communities and the state as a whole. Phase 2 exemplifies the power of voluntary partnerships between private landowners and the State to achieve lasting conservation goals and public benefits.

For these reasons—protection of private property and it's economic contribution to the state, its recreation and conservation values, and guarantee of public access—we respectfully urge your approval of the Montana Great Outdoors Working Forest Easement – Phase 2.

Respectfully,

Montana Conservation Society
Montana Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife
Flathead Wildlife Inc
Wild Sheep Foundation
Montana Wild Sheep Foundation
Safari Club International
Montana Outfitters & Guides Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Mule Deer Foundation
Montana Trout Unlimited
Montana Wildlife Federation
Boone & Crockett Club
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation