

**Prairie County
Economic Development
Council**

August 31, 2020

David Strohmaier
Board of County Commissioners
200 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

Re: Support for Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority

Dear Mr Strohmaier:

The Prairie County Economic Development Council (PCEDC) supports the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority. Establishment of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority will provide multiple opportunities for community and economic development in our area.

Reinstatement of passenger rail service to the area proposed by the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority will provide an option for public transportation as well as jobs in our region. This provides an opportunity for service industry businesses in our community like restaurants, motels, and convenience stores to conduct business.

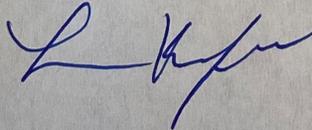
Passenger rail service provides a public transportation option for those that have a fear of flying. As rail service use by the coal and oil industry declines, passenger service also provides an opportunity to make use of rail infrastructure that is already in place.

A direct impact of passenger rail service in our community is access for people in rural areas like ours to obtain services only available in urban areas. These include important services like medical care and mental health services. This is especially important for veterans, the elderly, and those who are unable to drive themselves.

The Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority also has the opportunity to consider a myriad of services above and beyond passenger rail service. Package and mail service could serve our rural communities with the delivery of business equipment, parts, and supplies. It may also provide the ability to get supplies that can't be put on a plane.

The PCEDC recognizes the positive potential for our county and our region provided by the establishment of the Big Sky Passenger Rail Authority.

Sincerely,



Lance Kalfell
Chairman, Prairie County Economic Development Council

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*A coordinated Prairie
County effort which
improves the quality of
life and produces a
sustainable population
through a viable and
diversified economy.*