

Remarks by Lt Gov Angela McLean
US Senate Field Hearing on the Bakken
Sidney, MT – September 26, 2014

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to testify before the committee today.

Development in the Bakken Region has presented tremendous economic opportunities for Eastern Montana, but with those opportunities come challenges.

Governor Bullock was helping address those challenges long before he became Governor. As Attorney General, he instituted the first cross-border jurisdiction with North Dakota. And as governor, when the legislature refused to fund a public safety initiative in Eastern Montana, Governor Bullock worked with Chief DiFonzo to hire 2 new drug agents out of discretionary funds. Our administration intends to continue to fund those DCI agents.

We are also assisting oil and gas impacted schools. The Wibaux School District, for example, was awarded \$900,000 this year to assist in building a new building, among other things, and development-impacted schools have received a total of \$11.5 million in assistance this year alone.

Additionally, Miles, Dawson and Fort Peck Community Colleges have received over 2.5 million to address workforce challenges in Eastern Montana.

As part of his Main Street Montana Project, Governor Bullock announced a plan to assist the impacted counties in Eastern Montana.

The reduction in SRF long-term interest rates is already saving water and sewer ratepayers \$29 million this year alone.

And, as soon as the legislature approves the plan, the \$45 million grant program will get money where it's needed

But it is not just monetary assistance that we are providing. We are mobilizing "Rapid Response Teams." These teams are composed of the best people from Commerce, DEQ and DNRC, and customized to meet the needs of each community.

Existing programs such as CDBG and TSEP help counties and local governments fund infrastructure, public facility and housing projects.

There are also multiple infrastructure loan and financing programs, including the Commercial Loan Participation Program, the Infrastructure Loan Program, the Value-added Loan Program, and the INTERCAP Loan Program.

Additionally, there are programs that are designed to help communities with housing issues. The HOME Investment Partnership Program, Section 8 Program, Homeownership Program, and Housing Tax Credit Program serve to help mitigate affordable housing needs in Eastern Montana.

Programs such as the Community Technical Assistance Program work with local government officials, planners, developers, and the public to help communities address the impacts of development and population growth by providing technical assistance through the sharing of professional knowledge, conducting workshops, and providing templates, publications and research materials.

Since Governor Bullock took office, we have awarded funding to numerous projects in the Eastern Montana, including a \$450,000 grant to the City of Bainville, right here in Richland County, for a wastewater project.

These are just a few examples of the grant funding and investments that Governor Bullock's administration has made in Eastern Montana. The total amount of funding allocated for the 2013 and 2015 biennia to oil-impacted counties in Eastern Montana totals over \$57 million.