



March 23, 2020

The Honorable Steve Bullock  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 200801  
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Bullock,

On behalf of the Montana Association of REALTORS® (MAR), we commend you for your leadership in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also thank your department directors and state government workers for their hard work and dedication during this difficult and unprecedented time.

MAR is aware that several jurisdictions around the country have implemented “shelter in place” orders in response to the pandemic. While we hope a similar policy does not become necessary in Montana, we recognize it is a possibility. In the event such serious action is required, we offer our perspective on the nature of real estate services as essential business functions in our state.

As the statewide voice of REALTORS® and the real estate industry, MAR respectfully requests that you minimize potential disruptions to the real estate market by including real estate services among “essential services” or “essential business functions” when crafting language that may establish a shelter in place order in Montana. These services include but are not limited to permitting, financial, appraisal, inspections, construction, title work, legal, and recording of deeds and other instruments.

A shelter in place order that prohibits buyers and sellers from completing real property transactions could leave some Montanans in serious financial hardship and without adequate housing. Further, the real estate industry is a critical driver of Montana’s economy, and a shutdown of real estate markets will have a devastating impact on post-pandemic economic recovery. It is worth noting that several states including Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, and Nevada have declared real estate services as essential in their shelter in place or shutdown orders.

Montana REALTORS® are fully committed to protecting public health and personal safety during this outbreak and will continue to act with an abundance of caution as they work with their clients. In addition, they are intent on ensuring the essential service they provide to Montana families can continue as we navigate any reasonable actions state leaders deem necessary to slow the spread of the virus.

We look forward to partnering with you to limit the negative effects of the outbreak on Montanans. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Diane Beck".

Diane Beck, 2020 MAR President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark A. Simonich".

Mark Simonich, MAR CEO