

[Insert Date]

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

We, the undersigned members of the firearm, ammunition, hunting and shooting sports industry are proud to call Montana home. We have joined together to respectfully urge you to oppose President Biden's nominee David Chipman to lead the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).

We come from small towns and cities across the state and represent businesses of all sizes. In Montana, our industry is responsible for over 1,366 direct jobs. In 2020, we were responsible for over \$355 million in total economic activity in the state, paid over \$33.7 million in business taxes, and approximately \$5 million in excise taxes. We are law-abiding Americans and an essential part of our communities. We do not want the products we manufacture, distribute, and sell to end up in the wrong hands of individuals who should not have access to firearms.

As you know, gun ownership is part of our heritage and "critically important for Montanans." And as our U.S. Senator, you understand the importance being able to serve your local communities, and we appreciate your efforts advocating for small businesses. We provide the tools Montanans need to protect themselves and their families and to enjoy Montana's rich hunting and shooting sports traditions, something Mr. Chipman does not understand and respect.

Mr. Chipman is a staunch advocate for gun control. He has lobbied congress for gun control on behalf of Mayor Bloomberg's Everytown organization and the Giffords organization by whom he is still employed. He remains an advisor to Everytown. He strongly supports banning the most popular rifle in America. He opposes improving the ability of shooters and hunters to protect their hearing by reducing the regulatory burden and cost of obtaining a sound suppressor, arrogantly claiming doing so would only benefit gun industry lobbyists.

He also supported shuttering our businesses, at the most critical of times, when people concerned for their safety exercised and depended on their Second Amendment right. Despite his claims of being a "gun owner, Mr. Chipman does not truly respect gun owners or the Second Amendment. His statements equating last year's over 8.4 million first time gun owners as "Tiger King...putting themselves and their families in danger" and that gun owners should hide their firearm "behind the cans of tuna and beef jerky...and only bring [it] out if zombies start to appear" are appalling and insulting to gun owners across the country, including our friends, families, neighbors, customers, and your constituents.

Our industry has never opposed a nominee to be ATF Director. In fact, we have *supported* every nominee to come out of the Senate Judiciary Committee including President Obama's nominee B. Todd Jones.

We are, however, deeply troubled that confirming Mr. Chipman will irreversibly politicize the position of ATF Director doing permanent damage to the bureau. Former acting director of the ATF Michael Sullivan warned that with his political bias, confirming Mr. Chipman could compromise the agency's mission. We share these concerns. Mr. Chipman lacks the confidence of not only many lawful gun owners and members of our industry, but many of the great men and women of the agency he would be entrusted to lead.

Mr. Chipman would be charged with regulating our industry, which he paints as the enemy, calling us "shameless." We believe his strongly held personal beliefs will influence every decision he makes as director from how he implements policy, interprets regulations to how he allocates and prioritizes resources.

Confirming Mr. Chipman will undermine and hinder the cooperative relationship between members of our industry and ATF. Industry members would no longer feel comfortable reaching out to ATF with questions on regulatory and record keep matters fearing an overly aggressive and hostile ATF under the leadership of Mr. Chipman. The administration's recent "zero tolerance" announcement only serves to heighten this concern.

Mr. Chipman is not the right man for the job. We need a permanent director who understands and respects the industry he would regulate, and who respects gun owners and the Second Amendment. This is a view shared by Montanans. According to recently polling, more than half of voters in Montana oppose the nomination of Mr. Chipman.

We urge you to encourage President Biden to withdraw the nomination of Mr. Chipman and nominate a less controversial candidate. If he will not, then we urge you to vote NO on Mr. Chipman's nomination should it come to the floor of the senate for consideration.

Sincerely,