January 18, 2022

Matt Anderson, Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest
1801 N. First St.
Hamilton, MT   59840

Re: Montana Department of Resources and Conservation Request for Interested Party Status for Gold Butterfly Project Objections

Dear Mr. Anderson,

DNRC is requesting Interested Party status for any objections to the Draft Decision for the Gold Butterfly Project. The Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) has County Co-op fire protection interests and manages State Trust Lands in the area. Our agencies share the common goals of reducing fire risk and improving forest health in Montana's forest landscapes. The Gold Butterfly Project presents an important opportunity to return fire and increase vegetation diversity over a large landscape on the Bitterroot National Forest.

DNRC strongly supports the draft decision for this project. If changes requested by another party potentially reduce the ability to meet forest health and wildfire risk goals in the selected alternative, DNRC requests participation in the objection resolution discussions.

DNRC is committed to continuing a positive working relationship with the Bitterroot National Forest, specifically relating to landscape resiliency, wildfire response, community protection, and sustainable forest management. By working together, we can more effectively work towards an "all lands" approach to forest and watershed management and restoration benefiting both agencies' missions.

Sincerely,

Michael O'Herron

Mike O'Herron
Area Manager, Southwestern Land Office
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Cc: Thayer Jacques, Unit Forester; Stephen Kimball, Local Government Forest Advisor
       Objections Reviewing Officer, Northern Region Forest Service