

February 22, 2018

Park County Commissioners
414 E Callender St.
Livingston, MT 59047

Dear Commissioners:

This letter is written on behalf of the Cooke City, Colter Pass and Silver Gate Community Council, the Cooke City Area Chamber of Commerce, the Cooke City Water Board, the Silver Gate Water Board and the Cooke City Silver Gate Emergency Services Board.

Together, our five organizations represent a majority of the businesses and publicly managed facilities in the Cooke City, Colter Pass and Silver Gate area.

As you are well aware, our area of the county is facing serious problems with water and sewer needs. The dramatically increased tourist traffic moving in and out of Yellowstone National Park has literally swamped our tiny community. Our septic systems are dangerously in need of upgrading. Our water system in Cooke City proper is in danger due to faulty design and construction. The Silver Gate water system requires annual capital investment. At the same time, there are limited financial resources to meet these needs. The resort tax does not raise sufficient dollars to address these problems. We struggle each year to merely fund band aids to our mounting infrastructure problems.

As the public bodies in our area charged with managing public funds and facilities we believe we must work together to direct resort tax resources where they are most needed. For example, this year we have agreed that the Cooke City water system is in dire need of funds for emergency repairs and should receive priority. But we know that modernizing existing infrastructure systems in our communities will require a level of investment we cannot afford on our own.

The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, we request that Park County assign some priority to our water and sewer needs by assigning staff or a committee to work with us to search out available funds and other opportunities to solve these problems. In this connection, we wish to accept your offer that we send representatives to Helena on March 15, 2018 when Erica Strickland and Commissioner Berg meet with the Local Government Committee. We will send Deb Purvis, President of the Cooke City Water Board and Troy Wilson, President of the Cooke City Silver Gate Emergency Services Board. Second, we wish to assure the Commissioners that our five organizations have dedicated ourselves to working together on behalf of the community to bring solutions to these important problems.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Commission and staff what we have done so far, what we hope to do and how our organizations and the county can work together to achieve solutions.

Very Truly Yours,

Colter Pass, Cooke City, and Silver Gate Community Council

By Lance Egan

Colter Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate Chamber of Commerce

By Lisa Ann O'Klinger

Cooke City Water District

By Debi Plumm

Cooke City, Silver Gate Emergency Services

By Tom Wilson

Silver Gate Water Board

By Unpublished

Cc:

Yellowstone National Park – Superintendent Dan Wenk
Forest Service – Michael Thom, Gardiner District
Montana Senator - Jon Tester