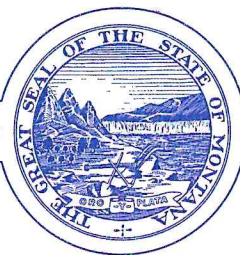


COMMISSIONER OF
POLITICAL PRACTICES



STATE OF MONTANA

CHRIS J. GALLUS
COMMISSIONER
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PO BOX 202401
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2401
www.politicalpractices.mt.gov

May 18, 2026

Steve Gunderson
167 Skyline Road
Libby, MT 59923

Subject: Complaint received May 4, 2026; Gunderson v. Backen, COPP-2026-CFP-009

Steve,

This letter acknowledges receipt of the formal Campaign Finance and Practices (CFP) Complaint you submitted, with a copy originally submitted via email message on Saturday, May 2, 2026 and the original, signed and notarized copy received by this office via USPS on May 4, 2026. The original, signed and notarized copy of the complaint received via USPS alleges violations of Montana election law under my jurisdiction as Commissioner of Political Practices, and otherwise conforms to the basic requirements of 44.11.106 ARM. Consequently, I will accept that version as filed.

Pursuant to the established process, a letter and copy of the complaint will be sent to the named respondent or their representative/s, requesting that they provide a written response to this office and retain pertinent records pending further investigation of this matter. Mont. Code Ann. (MCA) § 13-37-132. While you may provide additional information not included in the signed and notarized copy of the complaint as additional attachments, such as pictures and related information included in the version sent via email, this would need to be formally indicated and doing so would trigger a process where the respondent is provided that information and potentially an extension on the date by which a formal written response is requested.

I will review any additional materials relevant to this complaint for any deficiencies pursuant to 44.11.106 ARM, law, and prior relevant COPP rulings, and reserve the right to dismiss the complaint upon this initial inquiry. If this occurs, I will notify you and provide a basis for the dismissal. Alternatively, upon this further review, I may determine that a formal investigation is warranted. MCA § 13-35-111. If an investigation is conducted, a summary of facts and statement of findings will be prepared, and a copy will be sent to you. This generally involves a more extensive and time-consuming process, during which you may contact us for a status update. If violations are found to have occurred and prosecution is determined to be justified, this matter will be referred to the local county attorney. MCA § 13-35-124. The local county attorney then determines whether they will prosecute the matter or refer it back to me. If returned to me, I will either work with the responding party to settle the matter or prosecute it within their local jurisdiction in district court. MCA § 13-35-128.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris J. Gallus".

Chris J. Gallus
Commissioner of Political Practices