



# MONTANA STATE SENATE

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President Pro Tempore  
Senate District 19

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**U.S. Representative Ryan Zinke**  
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Senators and Congressmen,

May 22, 2024

The federal government is failing its national security objectives in Montana and is putting rural companies in an impossible position. This failure is also undermining state legislation that I passed last year prohibiting foreign adversaries from owning critical infrastructure and agricultural land in Montana.

Congress's Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 was intended to remove telecommunications equipment supplied by Chinese Communist Party-affiliated companies from our country's phone and internet infrastructure, including near sensitive military sites like Malmstrom Air Force Base's ICBM silos in Montana. Four years later, the program is short \$3 billion in funding, forcing rural telecom providers to choose between keeping risky Chinese equipment in their systems or potentially going bankrupt covering the replacement costs themselves, endangering rural Americans' cell service.

The FCC recently warned Congress that the "rip and replace" program is in danger of collapse. I want to bring your attention to a specific concern from on the ground in Eastern Montana.

I recently heard from the CEO of a small telecom provider that provides service in rural Montana, including near ICBM facilities. He confirmed to me that the company is still using Huawei equipment because of the lack of funding to implement Congress's "rip and replace" mandate.

Four years after Congress congratulated itself for passing legislation to address this national security threat, it's unacceptable that a Montana company is in this position. It's also undermining the work of the Montana Legislature and Governor Gianforte, who passed into law my Senate Bill 203 prohibiting adversaries like China from owning critical infrastructure in our state, by allowing CCP-affiliated corporations to continue to have a backdoor into that infrastructure.

I urge you to protect the security of the United States and Montana by following through to get Chinese Communist Party telecommunications equipment removed and replaced from Montana's phone and internet infrastructure.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ken Bogner".

Ken Bogner  
Montana Senate President Pro Tempore  
Senate District 19, Miles City