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Talking Points for Governor Judy Martz, Economic Development Meeting

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Senator * or Department*: BAUCUS

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Thank you for the opportunity to tell you what we're doing at the state level to spur economic development in Montana. We've been addressing it for the past two months in the legislative session, in our State of the State Address, and in cities and towns across Montana. We're glad you could join us today in the continuing effort and dialogue, Senator Baucus.

I very much look forward to hearing from you as to what you will do at the federal level, especially when it comes to major western issues like energy prices and guaranteed supply.
I- Over the next several years, we are planning major efforts at the state level to help Montana grow and prosper.

- We will need your help in achieving these goals.

II- Affordable, Reliable Energy

- A critical element of economic growth is affordable, reliable power. In fact, our economy will not grow without an affordable and steady source of energy.
- The energy shortage in California is wreaking havoc on the Intermountain West.
- If Montana is to prosper, we must capitalize on our abundant resources to supply our increasing energy needs.

- What we will do:
  - The Major Facilities Siting Act must be a mechanism for meeting our strict environmental standards, not a barrier to building new generation facilities or creating good paying jobs. We will modernize and streamline the MFSA in order to help in the building of new power plants.
• We will encourage the construction of new generation facilities with lower tax rates on capital investment in Montana.

• We will pursue allowing large industrial users the option of a one-time chance back on the power grid.

• The state must be prepared to assure that the default supplier will have long-term contracts in place.

• What will the federal government do to help us provide affordable energy for our businesses and residential customers?

III- Environmental Protection and Better Jobs

• Government must be responsive and efficient for all Montanans, including Montana’s job creators.

• We need to encourage government agencies to be more accountable by:
  • streamlining the permitting processes,
• helping people with environmentally sound business plans to start a business and stay in business,

• and protecting taxpayers with responsible bonding requirements that promote environmental stewardship.

• What we will do:

• The procedures for meeting the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) must be modernized in a manner that promotes environmental stewardship, not that serves as a barrier to responsible job creation. For the sake of Montana, we must cut the red-tape and streamline this process.

• Montana citizens deserve protection from anyone who irresponsibly negates their obligations to meet Montana’s tough environmental standards with sound management practices and reclamation.
• Montana must actively manage our resources with environmentally sensitive practices in order to create and sustain high paying jobs.

• What will the Federal Government do to help us streamline the red-tape and bureaucracy involved in the permitting processes?

IV- Government Reform for Economic Growth

• In order for economic growth to occur, we need business leaders and recruiters working directly with the Governor on a daily basis.

• What we will do:
  • The employees and budgets directly involved in business retention and recruitment within Commerce will come under direct supervision of the Governor.

  • A clearly defined structure for the new office of business development and retention is in place. It will focus on several areas:
• Business Recruitment and Retention
• Technology Development
• Permitting and Regulatory Processes
• Infrastructure Improvement
• Workforce and Education Development

• We are reorganizing the Department of Commerce to remove the regulatory functions, and make the office strictly a promotional department. The sole focus of the Department of Commerce will be on improving the business climate in Montana, marketing Montana as “open for business” to the world, and guiding new and existing businesses through the financing process.

• We will work with Washington through our Congressional delegation and through a new staff member in DC from the Governor’s office for:

• Reliable and expanded air service to Montana. I have already written to President Bush, asking his administration to compel Northwest Airlines
• Improving the federal permitting process for activities on federal lands.

• We will look at establishing several task forces which will look at the following areas:
  
  • Regulatory Reform  
  • Tax Reform  
  • Education Funding Reform  
  • Tort Reform

V- Quality Education and Workforce

• We will capitalize on the outstanding education we provide our young people by promoting accountability in our schools and universities.

• We will make job training and vocational education opportunities available to Montana’s young people.

• What we will do:

  • Montana job creators willing to invest in workforce training will receive an incentive for their part in preparing a quality workforce.
management and mechanics to stay at the negotiating table. The Bush Administration agreed and because of our joint efforts with the Bush Administration and the urging of other states, those negotiations will continue, with no one allowed to leave the table as was going to happen.

We are grateful for an administration that responded to our needs in a rural state where even a few cancelled flights mean a major problem to business and individuals throughout this state.

I urge you, Senator Baucus, to assure that all major airlines serving Montana, particularly those who may be subsidized in any way to serve our small population, to assure that they are living up to the responsibilities that go along with any subsidies they receive.

Other priorities:

- More and greater grants and federal money to Montana.
• We will examine the effectiveness of tuition freezes at vocational institutions to encourage attendance that will give us necessary time to strengthen and expand vocational and technological curriculum.

• We will look at ways to make K-12 and higher education more efficient with the dollars they receive.

• How will the federal government help with our efforts to educate and train our children and our workforce?

VI- Fairer Taxes for Stronger Growth

We must eliminate the death tax, Senator Baucus. Reforming it is not enough. Modifying a raw deal is unacceptable. Eliminating a raw deal is the only right thing to do. Families should not be taxed out of their ranches and small businesses simply because the last surviving parent died.
To attract and retain job creators, and to make it easier for Montanans to raise their families and ever improve our quality of life, we need meaningful tax reform that is fairer and simpler.

- What we will do:
  - We will lower our top marginal tax rates that are a major deterrent to retaining and attracting successful entrepreneurs.
  - We will eliminate the filing requirements for Montanans who live in poverty.
  - We will look to reduce our uncompetitive capital gains tax rate, which is currently ranked as the 48th worst in the nation.
  - We will stay the course on complete elimination of the business equipment tax, which has already allowed thousands of Montana businesses to reinvest tax savings in business expansion and new employment.
  - How will the federal government work to reform federal taxes, and let Montanans keep and invest more of what they earn?
QUESTIONS

1. Often politicians running for office ask voters “are you better off now than when I first took office?” You’ve been in office since 1974, and Montana has by all accounts gone down hill economically, our lumber and mining industries are in shambles, agriculture is in crisis, our schools are a mess, and working families are working harder and harder and slipping further behind. Why should Montana voters give you six more years?

2. You’ve run ads featuring President Bush, yet you’ve voted against him and the Republicans 75 percent of the time, even though Montana is overwhelmingly Republican. Even the White House has said that Montana should elect a real Republican, not a pale imitation. Why should voters re-elect someone who says he stand with the President, when in reality you often stand in his way?

3. Your FEC reports show that over ¾ of the money you’ve raised for your campaign has come from out-of-state special interest PACs. How can Montana voters expect you to represent their interests when you are so beholden to liberals like Ted Kennedy, Hillary Clinton and Hollywood celebrities?

4. You talk about how your clout and seniority makes a difference for Montanans, yet you’ve been unable to get Ag Disaster relief for farmers and ranchers despite your promises to them. These folks are hurting right now and every day it gets worse. You couldn’t even persuade your friend Tom Daschle to put you on the Ag conference committee to make sure our farmers and ranchers get the help they need. If you can’t get disaster relief for these folks before election day, should voters take that into account when they vote?

5. We have a Republican House that works well with the President as he fights the war on terrorism, but we have a Democrat Senate that seems intent on standing in his way every step of the way between now and the election. One Senator can make all the difference in the world, and if Montana simply voted along party lines, we could turn a Democrat obstructionist Senate into a Republican “work with the President” Senate. In this time of war overseas and insecurity here at home, wouldn’t it be better if we had a Republican Congress and President that can work together?

6. You are one of the few men in history who can say you voted for the biggest tax hike in history, and the biggest tax cut in history. When you voted for the Clinton tax increase, you said it was necessary bitter medicine to balance the budget. Then you’ve voted for the Bush tax cuts, and we are back in red ink for the foreseeable future. Have you changed your views on fiscal prudence, or is this really just an election year conversion?
MORE QUESTIONS

1. You have consistently voted against a national missile defense program. 
   India/Pakistan/nukes. Will you reconsider your opposition to the President’s initiative to 
   protect America?

2. Snowmobile ban in Yellowstone Park – for or against?

3. Nuclear waste/natl security – Yucca Mountain or temporary storage pools?

4. Some say that energy independence should be a national security goal. Agree? Auto CAFE 
   standards worked before – should govt challenge industry to raise CAFÉ standards?

5. Senator Taylor supports “zero footprint” drilling in the Rocky Mountain Front and says the 
   technology exists. If so, would you reconsider your opposition to oil and gas development in 
   the RMFront?

   MT dereg’d, and this month, Montanans are facing yet another electric price hike. Was your 
   vote wrong and would you support re-regulating electricity in MT?

7. As America focuses on homefront security, is the Bush administration doing enough to 
   secure our northern borders? What have you done?

8. The cost of health care is skyrocketing, premiums up 15%, small and large businesses across 
   Montana are saying they just can’t afford to provide coverage anymore. Long-term solution?

9. Medicare RX – Bush and Republicans have a plan on the table, so do Dems, and they are 
   hundreds of billions apart. Do you support your party’s proposal? You’re the chairman – 
   which plan do you support and when will you get it passed?

10. Medicare, Social Security – baby boom. Tax cut, less revenue, more deficits. Will you cut 
    benefits, cut COLA, means test, or extend the eligibility age?

11. As Finance Cmte chair, do you promise that all SS/Medicare trust fund money goes into 
    those programs and do not fund other government programs?

12. Welfare reform – do you support the President’s proposed 40 hour work requirement? 
    Marriage promotion plan?