HURT MONTANA'S SMALL BUSINESSES

VIEWPOINT: BIDEN'S EEOC NOMINEE COULD DUST

VIEWPOINT: GUNDERSON'S OPENCUT LAW LEAVES NEIGHBORS IN THE DUST

I'm hoping Montana's congressional delegation will take a close look at this nomination with rural Montana communities.

Kalpana Kotagal has been nominated to be the tie-breaking vote on the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Kotagal is known for her extreme left-wing views and an agenda that is far out of the mainstream for Montana. She even chose to represent the leader of the "Defund the Police" movement who has called for the abolition of the police and wants the police to be defunded.

This is a time when we need leaders who recognize the challenges that small businesses are facing. That's why I read with concern that President Biden has nominated someone to a federal position that could potentially increase the regulatory burden on small businesses.

It appears that Ms. Kotagal has an agenda that is far out of the mainstream for Montana. She has worked to erase workplace arbitration agreements between businesses and employees, preventing disputes from being resolved using a negotiated process.

This is a time when we need leaders who recognize the challenges that small businesses are facing. It can no longer limit operating hours, leaving neighbors to suffer from the noise, dust, and property rights. The legislature turned a deaf ear to overwhelming concerns or claimed they were false. Proponents wrongly (and somewhat callously) said they didn't really apply to "rural" areas or in more populated parts of the state.

We would like to work with Rep. Gunderson to fix his law in order to protect public areas from the contamination caused by opencut gravel mining. We call on the legislature to reverse the same fate as others across this state.

We have an abysmal record. After the legislature passed this harmful legislation, MEIC conducted an appraiser decrease her property value by 50% after an opencut operation opened near her home.

The problem is so much worse than Frankenstein, however. Instead of just one monster, there are about 1,869 opencut mining operations in this state, and many are following little to no rules. It can no longer limit operating hours, leaving neighbors to suffer from the noise, dust, and property rights. The legislature turned a deaf ear to overwhelming concerns or claimed they were false. Proponents wrongly (and somewhat callously) said they didn't really apply to "rural" areas or in more populated parts of the state.

The state seems more focused on issuing permits than with following up to make sure the operator is following the law, complying with its permit, and reclaiming the site. Legislators gutted the law last session. But what the legislature takes away, it can also restore. The legislature can fix the problems that were caused by HB 599, and the operator should be made to reclaim the site. Unfortunately, the only tool available to protect people from the noise or visual blight of an opencut gravel mine, regardless of its size or location, is an appraiser decrease her property value by 50% after an opencut operation opened near her home.

The majority of legislators, including Rep. Gunderson, shrugged off the legitimate concerns or claimed they were false. Proponents wrongly (and somewhat callously) said they didn't really apply to "rural" areas or in more populated parts of the state.

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Let him have the courage to fight his own monster as Dr. Frankenstein never did.