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Media Release

Billings Businesses Support Local Option Tax Authority

For Immediate Release

Billings, MT, December 4, 2014: Passing state legislation to allow local option tax authority is the Billings Chamber's number one priority. The Chamber supports local option taxing authority as a mechanism for augmenting current revenues for local jurisdictions. This would allow for all communities in Montana to determine whether or not they want to implement this tax, and for what purposes. The tax should have local voted authorization and include a defined purpose, a sunset provision, and should be used in the community in which it is generated.

The Billings Chamber surveyed its members and asked them to respond to the following question: *"Should local governments have the authority to implement a local option tax if approved by the voters, for the purpose of local property tax relief, local infrastructure development and/or other local needs as identified by voters, or not?"* 2,482 members (owners, managers and employees) received the survey. 288 responses were recorded, yielding these results:

- Yes, should have authority to implement local option tax: 77.4%
- Don't know: 4.2%
- No, should not have authority to implement local option tax: 18.4%

Critical elements of Local Option Tax Authority legislation are that legislators are NOT being asked to create a new tax. The legislators are being asked to simply create the authority for municipalities across Montana to enact a local option tax. If the state will allow, municipalities shall only enact the tax by means of a vote from residents within the municipality. The tax shall contain property tax relief. Furthermore, non-resident visitors spend \$373 million here each year. For each 1% taxed, visitors would contribute about \$3.5 million to the Billings community.

"These results support the Chamber pursuing Local Option Tax Authority as our number one priority in the 2015 legislative session," explains Billings Chamber President and CEO John Brewer. "We are hopeful that our state-elected officials will see the value to communities across the state and allow our residents to vote on this issue."

Next week, the Montana Chamber and the Billings Chamber will release results of a survey of statewide voters on the same question.

More information on local option tax authority can be found on our [Public Policy website](#).

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Advocate. Connect. Grow.

The Billings Chamber of Commerce represents you, our 1,200 members who employ more than 44,000 people. We help you grow your bottom line by connecting you to opportunities and advocating for your business and our community.