

Date: February 9, 2017

Dear Billings Area Legislators,

The undersigned support the local option authority, which allows communities the opportunity to ask their voters whether they want to enact a local tax for infrastructure projects. The Local Option Infrastructure and Property Tax Relief bill contains effective provisions to ensure usage of the local option fosters accountability and trust between local voters and their government. Specifically, the bill requires:

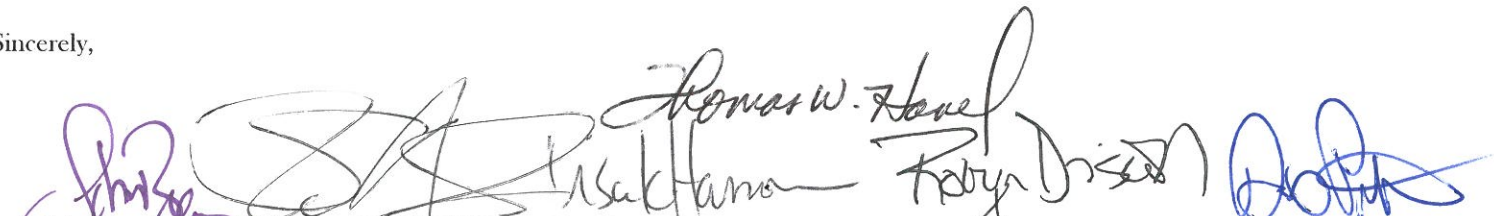
- Local voter approval
- A maximum rate of four (4) percent
- Mandatory sunset / renewal
- Limited range of taxable items (consistent with existing Resort Tax)
- Specified amount (minimum 10%) dedicated for property tax relief
- Use of funds restricted to “critical infrastructure,” defined as local capital improvement and development that drives continued economic growth, including streets, roads, bridges, water supply, wastewater treatment, sewer and other locally-prioritized public facilities identified within the local petition.

We strongly encourage you to support this local option bill as an important facet of the Montana Infrastructure Coalition’s package of short- and long-term solutions to the substantial infrastructure problems our state faces. Moving our community forward requires flexibility and additional options for funding the projects we need. We believe the local option authority is a good tool to help our community improve upon itself. And we are not the only ones. In fact, a majority of Montana supports the local option authority.

- 67% of Montanans support the local option according to a MT Chamber December 2016 survey
- 81% of Billings Chamber membership supports the local option according to an April 2016 survey
- 58% of respondents to the September 2016 City of Billings’ Citizen Survey support local option

Please support your community by giving voters the right to decide on their local government funding mechanisms. Together we can authorize community transformation and help provide the voice and prosperity your constituents rightfully deserve. Thank you for your support on the local option.

Sincerely,



John Brewer President/CEO Billings Chamber of Commerce	Steve Arveschoug Executive Director Big Sky Economic Development	Lisa Harmon Executive Director Downtown Billings Alliance	Tom Hanel Mayor of Billings	Robyn Driscoll Yellowstone County Commissioner	Denis Pitman Yellowstone County Commissioner
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