



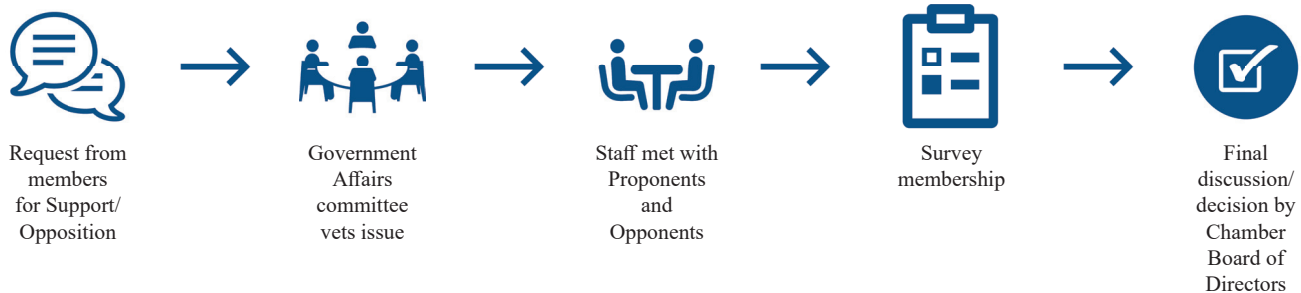
Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce Opposes Open Space Bond/Conservation Levy

The Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the passage of the Open Space Bond and Conservation Levy on the November 2018 ballot. Over the past few years, residents and businesses in Missoula have seen significant increases in their tax burden with the passage of several bonds compounded by a significant increase in property value assessments. A survey of Chamber membership found a large majority oppose the bond at this time.

One of the largest issues impacting workforce in our community is the lack of attainable housing. While this bond is well-intentioned and preserves what we all love about Missoula, we feel that at this time it is a higher priority to address the attainable housing issue.

This was not an easy decision for the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors. The decision to oppose the Open Space Bond and Conservation Levy came after a rigorous process spanning three months. Chamber staff met with both sides of the issue, surveyed Chamber members and discussed the proposition in multiple Government Affairs committee meetings.

Missoula Chamber Issue Position Process



The Chamber recognizes the importance of open space to the quality of life in Missoula. This quality of life allows the community to attract and retain workers as well as new businesses. Over the past decade, Missoula has done an excellent job of preserving recreational and agricultural land in the community and has created a community we can all enjoy.

Unfortunately, we've also seen a significant rise in median home prices that is likely to be compounded with the removal of developable land. Though there are many factors that affect home pricing, the cost of land is significant. The public and private sectors have both spent considerable resources researching this issue over the past couple years. Now it is time to put attainable housing at the forefront of the community's list of priorities. Failing to address the need for attainable workforce housing could have negative consequences for the Missoula economy and inhibit the ability to attract and retain businesses.

As housing costs have increased, a greater percentage of the workforce has been pushed outside of Missoula resulting in increased strain on infrastructure as well as creating challenges for attracting new businesses and workers.



Now is the time to focus the energy of the community to solve the housing attainability problem currently facing Missoula. Until this issue has been addressed, the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce feels it is inappropriate to devote further tax dollars to removing developable land from the market. We must have all the tools available to solve this important community need. For this reason, combined with the strain recent bond initiatives have placed on Missoula's business community and residents, the Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce opposes the passage of the \$15 million Open Space Bond and Conservation Levy this November.

Respectfully,
Missoula Area Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Johnson".

Will Johnson, Chair of the Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Latrielle".

Kim Latrielle, President/CEO

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Clint Burson, Director of Government Affairs at (406) 215-1323 or clintb@missoulachamber.com.