

Diverse Coalition Forms to Oppose CI-121, Calls Initiative ‘Bad for Montana Families, Businesses, Farmers, and Ranchers’

A large, diverse, and unconventional coalition of Montanans has come together to oppose CI-121, a proposed measure that changes the Montana Constitution to limit valuations of property for tax assessment purposes. The coalition partners are urging Montana voters to decline to sign any petition attempting to place CI-121 on the ballot.

The coalition includes the Montana Association of Realtors, Montana Farm Bureau, Montana Farmers Union, Montana AFL-CIO, Montana Federation of Public Employees, Montana Infrastructure Coalition, Montana Chamber of Commerce, Montana League of Cities and Towns, Montana Bankers Association, Montana Contractors Association, Montana Rural Education Association, and Montana Budget and Policy Center.

“Implementing this tax policy by constitutional initiative limits the prospects of meaningful tax reform that could benefit everyone who lives and works in Montana,” said **Montana Chamber of Commerce Government Relations Director Bridger Mahlum**. “CI-121 is not the solution. The Montana Chamber is committed to identifying fiscally responsible alternatives that don’t amount to tax shifts on small businesses.”

“Montana’s economy is on the rebound, but CI-121 would hit Montana’s small businesses hard by shifting our state’s tax burden onto main street businesses, farmers, and ranchers,” said **Montana Farm Bureau Executive Vice President John Youngberg**. “Such a shift could significantly hurt the bottom lines of farmers, ranchers, and small businesses and discourage them from making investments in our communities when we need it most. That’s the wrong direction for our great state.”

“Amending Montana’s Constitution is not the place to establish complex tax policy,” said **Montana Bankers Association President and CEO Cary Hegreberg**. “If this ballot measure were to pass, we would never be able to fix the unintended consequences that will hit first-time homebuyers, seniors, agricultural landowners, and small businesses. If you don’t understand what CI-121 really does, please don’t sign it.”

The coalition members in opposition to CI-121 represent tens of thousands of working Montana families, small business owners, and farmers and ranchers in every Montana community.

“Montanans should be aware there are major long-term impacts from this proposal,” said **Montana Budget and Policy Center Co-Director Heather O’Loughlin**. “Declining to sign is the only option to keep bad tax policy out of our constitution.”

“The diversity of this coalition should make people think twice about signing any petitions to put CI-121 on the November ballot,” said **Montana Contractors Association Executive Director David Smith**. “Urge your family, friends and anyone who asks – Decline To Sign. If this poorly crafted initiative makes it into the Montana Constitution, the tax burden will surely be shifted to business owners and business equipment. Tax policy should be handled by elected officials, not as a concrete block in the Constitution.”

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