



To: ACT Coalition
From: Jeff Walters, Chief Operating Officer
Re: Local Option Authority

ACT Coalition,

I am writing to express my adamant support for the creation of statewide local option tax authority in Montana. I've personally had an opportunity to discuss local option authority with civic leaders in a number of other Montana communities, including some in rural areas, and I'm encouraged by their interest and support.

Montana, and particularly Billings, has reached a point in which our continued prosperity is highly dependent on being competitive, both economically and from a standpoint of place making. It is imperative that we continue to develop the types of community amenities and infrastructure that will allow us to be a regional economic competitor; but also to attract and retain a competitive workforce. Technology now allows job seekers to pursue opportunities anywhere. To continue to be regionally competitive, we need to provide the kinds of services and amenities that entice today's job seekers to choose Montana.

For far too long, communities large and small across Montana have been solely dependent on the economic machinations of state and local government. Taxpayers have now grown weary of supporting every community need on the back of their property tax, while millions of dollars drive by every day virtually untouched. The time has come for our Montana legislature to enable each and every community in Montana to choose their own economic future by authorizing local option.

I am happy to support legislation in our upcoming session that authorizes Montana's communities, large or small, to control their own economic prosperity by choosing whether or not to implement a local option tax. The time is NOW.

Sincerely,

Jeff Walters, Chief Operating Officer