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Respondent

2 Anonymous

242:02

Time to complete

1. Name & office you are seeking *

Roy P. Handley, House District 93

2. The 2023 Legislature passed several bills to encourage housing development by revising land use laws (subdivision), reducing regulatory barriers, and streamlining processes.

SB 382 – Montana Land Use Planning Act.

SB 131 – Revise exempt subdivision review timelines.

HB 211 – Revise local subdivision review process.

What are your opinions of the legislation listed? What specific policy changes would you recommend/support to further encourage housing development in our community? *

I am in favor of increasing housing availability and affordability by reducing regulations and barriers.

3. Missoula is an employment anchor in western Montana, but a quarter of Missoula's workforce lives outside Missoula County. The 2019 Missoula County Housing Action Plan states, "Underlying high housing costs is an undersupply of around 2,400 housing units in Missoula County".

What specific policies would you pursue to address the community's workforce housing deficit and ongoing needs? *

Provide tax breaks and waiving of building permit fees to businessmen who build housing units for their employees. Construction permitting needs to be streamlined for these affordable housing projects as well.

4. During past few years as home prices have soared, rental rates have seen a similar trend. Locally some people have voiced concerns that short-term rentals are reducing available rental units and increasing rental rates.

What is your opinion on short-term rental regulation? *

Property owners should be able to do what they want with their properties, including renting to who they want, whether it be long-term or short-term rentals.

5. Montana policymakers must address the disconnect between growth in our communities and inadequate infrastructure.

What legislative changes would you support or propose to help communities invest in infrastructure to keep up with the demands of growing local economies and populations? *

New developments need to be planned so as not to overwhelm a community. With new development and construction also comes new tax revenue, which should be used toward improving the infrastructure to help accommodate the growth. Also see the answer to #6 for increasing revenue.

6. Property taxes are the primary funding source for local government services and infrastructure and help to fund public services, infrastructure, and education. Increasing mill levies and increasing property value assessments have left many property owners demanding relief.

What policies would you support to provide permanent property tax relief to Montana homeowners? *

By reducing the tax burden and regulations on businesses, business owners would spend less time on government red tape, and have more resources for expanding & improving business, leading to more job opportunities, which leads to more workers and more income tax base. The legislature should consider a tax on the purchase of luxury items (but no sales tax on everyday essential items). With these other tax collections, property taxes could be reduced.

7. State Law provides for tax increment financing (TIF) and urban renewal districts. TIF is used within urban renewal districts to combat blight and promote economic development. However, critics of TIF say that these urban renewal districts can be in place for many years, and TIF diverts property tax revenue away from schools and county governments.

What is your opinion of TIF? What changes to TIF statutes would you recommend, if any? *

An end date needs to be placed on all TIFs. There can be no 'increase of scope' for these TIFs once established.

8. One in five homes in Montana is serviced by an onsite septic system. If properly installed and maintained, septic systems are a safe and cost-effective means of waste disposal for homeowners and businesses. Some regulations on septic systems are enforced by local health departments, and enforcement is inconsistent. For instance, how bedrooms are counted to determine what size of system is necessary and how nonconforming systems are handled varies.

Will you support legislation that brings greater consistency to the enforcement of regulations on existing septic systems? *

I support legislation that would create consistency with septic system regulations across all Counties in Montana

9. Housing development outside of areas with access to municipal water systems frequently rely on exempt appropriations statutes for water supply.

What are your thoughts on current statutes? What, if any, changes would you support? *

Current statute for groundwater exempts uses that will draw less than 35 gpm from obtaining a water right permit before drilling a well. This exemption has been helpful to farmers and ranchers in providing water for their livestock. Because most stockwater systems and individual homes use 10 gpm or less, I would propose reducing the exemption to around 10 gpm. Even with such a reduced flowrate exemption, large housing developments should be required to demonstrate that adequate groundwater or surface water is available and obtain water rights prior to any construction starts.

10. **Do you support Montana's existing code regarding exemptions on discrimination in housing (49-2-305)? ***

Yes, I think that the exemptions for these special circumstances are reasonable.

11. REALTORS® believe that private property rights are fundamental to our free-market system and are a cornerstone upon which this nation was founded. Our United States and Montana Constitutions recognize and protect the right to own property. A strong economy depends upon preserving the right to freely own, use, and transfer real property.

If elected, what approach will you take to balancing private property rights with public interests? *

I agree that ownership of private property is a fundamental right. Property owners pay taxes on property and lands they own, thus property owners should be able to use that property as they deem to be reasonable and that is within the legal framework. Montana currently has many diverse public lands that are accessible to the public, some requiring fees for the public to use. Perhaps some of the fees collected can be used to acquire more access opportunities for the public.

12. Treasurer's Name, Address and Phone Number *

Kristine Handley, PO Box 270, Clinton, MT 59825 406-825-7781

13. Will you accept PAC contributions? *

Yes

No

Thank you!

We appreciate you taking the time to complete our survey so that we might better understand your position on key issues facing our community. The committee will be evaluating surveys received and responding within a few weeks regarding next steps.