



MONTANA PROSPERITY PLAN

2017 Legislative Agenda

Pursuing Pro-Business Public Policy at the 2017 Legislative Session

The Montana Chamber of Commerce is the state's leading business advocate and the driving force in promoting a favorable business climate. Montana needs changes that will bring more well-paying careers to the state, strengthen small businesses, and promote long-term, sustainable prosperity for years to come. The Montana Chamber will focus its legislative efforts on the four core objectives of Envision 2026.

envision
2026

A plan for Montana's future

Infrastructure Investment

The Montana Chamber is leading and working closely with the Montana Infrastructure Coalition to identify creative methods to fund infrastructure with a tight 2017 state budget in mind. For more information, visit <http://MtInfrastructure.org/>.

The Montana Chamber will support:

A traditional cash and bonding bill to fund most-needed projects.

Fuel tax increase to fully leverage federal dollars (8 to 1 match) and give a much-needed boost to Montana local governments.

A local option infrastructure tax to allow more communities to impose a resort-style tax upon local voter approval. This tool requires pre-/re-approval with a mandatory sunset, applicability to a limited range of luxury items, a portion of the revenue returned to local residents through property tax relief, and a commitment of revenue to be invested in infrastructure.

Cap the Coal Tax Trust Fund at \$1 billion, with new revenues used to back bonds issued specifically for vetted and prioritized infrastructure projects.

Support enabling legislation to provide local governments with the ability to leverage private investment through **Public Private Partnerships (P3s)**.



Workforce Development

Our members and other employers note this is a top concern now, and in the future. Availability of workers and the skills gap are significant issues.

The Montana Chamber will support:

Apprenticeship and vocational training programs through tax credits and/or grants. We will propose an apprenticeship tax credit and/or grant program with an increased amount for veterans.

Efforts to Keep Higher Education Affordable, like reauthorization of the 6-mill levy.



Business Climate

This objective of Envision 2026 is a familiar one for those who have worked with the Montana Chamber: reduce the cost of doing business and improve the business climate in Montana. We will continue to promote tax relief and legal reform while simultaneously blocking efforts to create unnecessary regulation for new and established businesses.

The Montana Chamber will support:

Simplification of the state income tax code, **reducing** the business equipment tax, **revising** the treatment of exempt intangible personal property, **revising** penalty and interest laws for businesses facing delayed audits, and **adjusting** the tax payment structure for business capital investment.

Revising punitive damages laws, revising lawsuit judgment interest, seatbelt admissibility (the use or nonuse of seatbelts shall be submitted into evidence in any civil action), and **revising laws related to defensive medicine.**

Adjusting the definition of “small group” employer in health insurance law from one with fewer than 50 employees to one with 100 employees or fewer.

Conducting an Interim study on workers’ compensation laws. We are proposing a 2017-2018 Interim study to obtain more information about the issue of subrogation in workers’ compensation.

Protecting the 2011 workers’ compensation rate-reduction achievements. We will defend against any effort to undo our legislation passed in 2011 (HB 334) that resulted in the largest work comp premium relief in recent memory.



Entrepreneurial Sustainability

The Montana Chamber will work to maintain Montana’s reputation as a national leader in entrepreneurial development, as well as sustainability of new and established businesses.

The Montana Chamber will support:

Legislation that will **enhance Montana’s entrepreneurial support infrastructure.**

Angel investor/venture capitalist tax credit for individuals who encourage the next generation of businesses.

Proposals that will **eliminate barriers to entrepreneurial growth.**



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YOUR BUSINESS ADVOCATE