

Goose Bay Road Residents
Lakeside, MT 59922

August____, 2025

Governor Greg Gianforte
P.O. Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620-0802

Dear Governor Gianforte, Re: 2nd Home Property Tax

We are five households on Goose Bay Road whose homes are on Flathead Lake. All of the homes were built between 1971 and 1996. There are 10 households on our road. Eight of the 10 households are Montana year round residents. Six of the 10 are 2nd homes. Of the six 2nd homes, three are owned by retirees on fixed income. The other three are “family legacy” homes. Of the 10 households, all homeowners are or were small business owners and entrepreneurs or hard working members of the middle class.

The 2nd home tax will punish a majority of us. Are we the kind of people you wish to target and harm with this tax? We do not believe so.

Therefore, we are writing you to respectfully request that you call a Special Session of the Legislature prior to its reconvening in 2027 due to the urgent matter of the recently passed 2nd Home Property Tax that will go into effect prior to January 1, 2027. Hence, the need for a Special Session prior to that time to address the unintended consequences of this tax that will harm Montanans and Montana’s economy.

Unintended consequences just on our little road:

1. For retirees on fixed incomes, this tax will force them to sell their homes. With the new super high appraisals for 2025-26, who will buy? More millionaires and billionaires will be drawn into Montana to further jack up real estate prices and continue to make Montana unaffordable for ordinary working citizens. **Do you really want this?**
2. For “legacy property” owners, this tax will force them to sell as succeeding generations who are raising their own families will not be

able to afford the taxes, and their dreams of continuing to enjoy their family's vacation property on beautiful lakes, rivers and woods in Montana will be dashed. **Do you really want this?**

3. For hardworking middle class families or small business men and women who have saved enough to buy a 2nd home for their families, the 2nd home tax will force them to sell as well and penalize success, savings and creating important family memories. **Do you really want this?**
4. The enclosed Letters to the Editor published in the Daily Interlake on August 10 and 24 detail how this tax will harm ranchers and farmers. **Do you really want this?**
5. From conversations with friends, neighbors and acquaintances, we know of no one who thinks this is a good idea, not only for personal reasons, but because it is unfair in its application. Such a gross disparity in tax rates will invite tax cheating, and all sorts of unconventional arrangements to avoid the tax. **Do you really want this?**

Instead of a very targeted 2nd home tax, it was written quite broadly and harms hardworking Montanans like all of us on Goose Bay Road, causing a worse housing problem than before and inviting more super rich to buy up over appraised modest vacation homes.

Suggested changes to 2nd Home Tax to be considered by Special Session:

- Hold hearings to hear from citizens like us and delay implementation until the 2027 Legislative Session in order to rethink this and make appropriate amendments to protect ordinary Montanans
- Grandfather 2nd homes purchased before a date that tracks when the buying frenzy by out of staters began around 2020 that has caused the stratospheric rise in market values for everyone.
- Grandfather 2nd homes purchased for under a certain dollar amount to protect middle class 2nd home owners, such as under \$1 million.
- Protect all Montanans from being taxed on "unrealized gains" caused by the buying frenzy since 2020 by limiting increases in appraised value to some statutory amount per year, like 2-5%. This way homeowners who do not wish to sell or be forced out of their homes by large market place fluctuations would be protected.

We know you are a common sense businessman and family man. We hope our concerns will cause you to take action. Good governance is critical for Montana's economy, for citizen morale and for a tax system generally viewed as fair and equitable to which people are generally willing to comply.

We understand the intent of the tax but believe it is overly broad in its impact and will not achieve the objectives of seeking to create more affordable housing for Montanans by shifting the tax burden to the vast financial resources of the many super wealthy who have come to Montana to buy 2nd homes, especially since COVID. If that was how the tax actually will work, you would not be receiving this letter.

Please grant our requests your serious consideration.

With respect and gratitude,