



**Larimer County  
League  
of Women Voters**



## ***Ballot Issues***

- **City of Loveland**
- **City of Berthoud**

## ***Election 2020***

***Ballots Due November 3***

*Ballots Mailed  
Week of October 9*

### **City of Loveland Ballot Issue 2A**

To impose an additional sales and use tax of one percent, to support the city’s public safety, infrastructure and capital equipment, and operations and maintenance.

#### **KEY PROVISIONS**

An additional sales and use tax of one percent, except on food for home consumption, would be imposed beginning January 1, 2021.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The City of Loveland is currently experiencing a budget shortfall as a result of increased services and costs over time. The COVID-19 pandemic, and subsequent recession, has exacerbated the decline in sales and use tax collections. The total projected budget shortfall for 2021 is approximately \$15 million. An increase in sales tax revenue would help to balance the 2021 budget and mitigate the impact of the pandemic-caused recession.

The proposed increase would raise the city’s sales tax, which has remained at 3% since 1984, to 4%, while leaving the sales tax on grocery food for home consumption unchanged.

The city council has passed an ordinance which directs the management and allocation of the revenue from the proposed 1% sales tax increase to address the revenue shortfall without specific allocation to any category for fiscal years 2021, 2022 and 2023. Beginning in fiscal year 2024 the funds would be allocated as follows:

- Public safety (20 percent)
- Acquire, construct, and maintain the City’s infrastructure and capital equipment (50 percent)
- Municipal operations and maintenance (30 percent)

A City of Loveland staff estimate indicates that the tax increase would generate approximately \$18.3 million in its first year and \$236.8 million over the next decade.

#### **THOSE IN FAVOR SAY**

This tax increase would be used to increase the wages of first responders such as firefighters, currently about 17% lower than those employees of agencies in neighboring communities.

This tax increase would be used to pay for services currently provided to citizens – not growing government; this would maintain the current quality of life/level of services. Loveland has not passed a tax increase in 35 years, and our local city government has done a great job of working within our means all those years. With inflation and population growth we cannot keep up.

#### **THOSE OPPOSED SAY**

The city of Loveland should look into other revenue sources rather than increase taxes. Specifically mentioned were tourist-boosting efforts and the resulting increased revenue.

The burden of an increased sales tax would be too great during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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City Of Berthoud Ballot Issue 3B

The town of Berthoud would opt-out of Colorado SB152 which prohibits local governments from providing cable television services, telecommunications services, or high-speed internet services, unless such services are authorized by the voters.

The town of Berthoud would opt-out of Colorado SB152 which prohibits local governments from providing cable television services, telecommunications services, or high-speed internet services, unless such services are authorized by the voters.

BACKGROUND

In 2005 the Colorado General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 05-152 (SB152) which prohibits local governments from providing cable television services, telecommunication services, or high-speed internet services either directly or indirectly, unless such services are authorized by the electorate. SB152 prohibits most uses of municipal funds for improving local broadband service without first going to a vote and receiving approval from voters to opt-out. As of January 2019, a total of 40 counties and 102 municipalities in the state of Colorado have opted out of SB152.

A voter approved exemption from SB152 would allow the town of Berthoud to evaluate all possibilities for municipal broadband services.

The town of Berthoud has stated that it is not prepared to provide broadband services and does not currently have a plan to do so. Opting out of SB152 would not increase taxes or obligate Berthoud to provide broadband infrastructure or services. It would simply remove the prohibition on expending public funds to provide service and would allow the Town to explore and develop plans in the future.

THOSE IN FAVOR SAY

This measure will not increase taxes or obligate Berthoud to provide infrastructure or services but rather remove the prohibition so such actions can be considered in the future. Local options should remain open and local citizens should be the ones to make the decisions on how best to improve connectivity within their communities.

Other Colorado communities have voted to opt out of the law, and networks such as Longmont's have been successful.

THOSE OPPOSED SAY

Residents can already get fast internet from Comcast, CenturyLink and other providers. The city also has fiber optic lines connecting the municipal building to emergency facilities for city services.

Private sector providers oppose cities, towns, and other government entities building, owning, and operating broadband networks where existing networks are in place. With or without voter approval, if government-owned networks are going to compete with private entities, there should be a far more level playing field. Governments should not be able to use taxpayer dollars to overbuild existing networks and then compete against private companies for customers

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS LARIMER COUNTY EDUCATION FUND is not responsible for the accuracy or fairness of the arguments of either side. The pro and con statements are a compilation of the material submitted by proponents and opponents of each ballot issue available at the time of printing.

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR BALLOT BY OCTOBER 26 CONTACT: Larimer County Clerk at (970) 498-7878

