

MOR Legislative Candidate Questionnaire

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Name: Diane Sands

Office: Re-election as Senator for SD 49 (Lolo, Target Range, Orchard Homes)

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I accept PAC contributions and appreciate MOR's past support.

Issues:

1. Subdivision policies. As you state, subdivision policy must be "balanced, efficient, and predictable" and I agree. The responsibility for subdivision policies lies at the legislature, primarily through either the Business and Labor committees or Local Government, with implementation resting at the local level. I do not serve on either of these committees, but a review of bills submitted to the last legislature does not show that there has been major need for legislation. Legislation is a constant process of amending existing statutes in major and minor ways. If MOR believes legislation is needed, you are the experts, and I would welcome an opportunity to discuss it and see that legislation is requested to consider subdivision issues in the 2019 session.

2. Housing affordability. Available housing that is appropriate and affordable continues to be a pressing issue in many local communities and is a driver of our Montana economy. I am proud that Missoula has taken the issue head on through collaboration between many private parties and our local governments. Progress is being made. The role of the legislature is to develop statutory language around issues. We have a role in adopting regulations, but much of regulatory work is the role of the administration, not the legislature, or the role of local government, working with non-governmental parties.

Of the 6 bills related to housing last session, 3 became law, and I have a role in one of those statutes. As a leader in Montana's major criminal justice reform package of bills last session, we passed a bill to assist the housing re-entry needs of offenders coming out of the corrections system. I am the only legislator sitting on the Dept. of Corrections Re-Entry Task Force that oversees a very small amount of funding that assists with housing to stabilize offenders, reduce the cost of corrections, and provides for public safety. Missoula has been a state leader in this work.

As you know, state funding is extremely limited always, but currently even more so. I don't see a state role for general fund money for housing. Most relevant is the tax advantages we give homeowners and other tax incentives we give to builders.

3.TIF and Urban Renewal. As I have said, I do not serve on the legislative committees that address this issue, however, I do not see a recent history of bills being introduced to discuss it. Therefore, I assume that local governments and partners are working together to achieve the goals of TIF under current legislative authority and no major changes are being discussed on a statewide basis that would lead to a request for either a study bill or draft legislation.

This, like other housing issues, is a topic of shared responsibility between state, local and private entities. MOR, you are the experts on this topic and if it is one that demands legislative action, I would be glad to listen and to work with all parties to bring a viable proposal to the 2018 session.