

When government does not function the way citizens desire, ballot measures are a way to make their voices heard. Through ballot initiatives, citizens can propose new legislation, amend current legislation, or repeal legislation. The state legislature may also put forward ballot measures that respond to state Supreme Court rulings or that are required for the functioning of current legislation. Like many regulations, ballot measures can take place at the local (county), state, or federal level, and require a simple majority of voters voting in favor to pass.



During our organization's history we have worked on a number of ballot measures. Most significantly was our support of Ballot Initiative 177 that stopped the creation of new gold and silver cyanide leach mines across the state. Most recently was our support of Initiative 186 that would have disallowed the Department of Environmental Quality from permitting hard rock mines likely to require permanent water treatment due to acid mine drainage.

Because this form of direct democracy puts a lot of power in the hands of the citizenry and removes a number of opportunities for public debate, we are careful in choosing ballot initiative positions and actively oppose or support ballot initiatives on a limited basis. Our decision to support ballot measures is on a per-basis measure and by approval of the Montana Audubon Board.

The policy of Montana Audubon regarding Ballot Measures is to:

- Education the public and decision makers about ballot measures we support as an organization
- Oppose legislation that makes it harder for citizens to run ballot measures
- Support ballot measures that are crucial to our mission, that support issues we have advocated for throughout time, and that have broad public support
- Support and encourage a democratic and accessible ballot initiative education, debate, and signing process.