

--ATTENTION—TAXPAYERS AND BUSINESS OWNERS--

Missoula County Commissioners and the Montana Department of Transportation have the ability to secure Federal Grant dollars to replace the 90 year old, single lane Maclay Bridge. The source of the money is motor fuel tax dollars paid by motorists and deposited in the Federal Highway Trust Fund. The current bridge cost estimate is over \$10 million. Getting this Federal Grant would mean \$10 million brought into the local economy of Missoula County and surrounding area.

Equally important as the \$10 million brought into our struggling economy is what will happen if the Commissioners do not take the grant money and instead do nothing. The on-going, ever increasing maintenance of the aging bridge and the cost of replacing it when it is eventually Condemned by Inspection or it catastrophically fails will be paid for Missoula County taxpayers. More than 600 bridges in the U.S. have failed since 1989.

It's a common sense choice: Do we take into our economy \$10 million of Federal Grant money or do we wait and spend \$10 million of our county tax dollars? We need the Federal Grant money now to build a safe, new, two-lane bridge!

Environmental Common Sense

The existing bridge or a new one at the same location forces traffic on to North Avenue, which Dead Ends near Clements Avenue. All traffic going east to Target Range School, Big Sky High School, Community Hospital, or into town, or west to Big Flat and Blue Mountain, must now meander through the residential neighborhood, making additional stops/starts at more intersections. However a new bridge at the west end of South Avenue would eliminate the extra distance and stops while reducing impacts to the residential area. It is just common sense to build a new straight-line bridge at South Avenue.

The difference in environmental impacts over the next 100 years from this traffic crossing a bridge to North Avenue, a street that Dead Ends near Clements, versus a direct route over a South Avenue bridge, is huge. There are currently 2,000 to 3,000 vehicles per day crossing the bridge. The total extra distance each vehicle must travel per day is ½ mile per trip, or 1,000

to 1,500 miles per day or 365,000 to 547,500 miles per year. The rate of bridge traffic is certain to increase but if the rate stayed in the same range, it would mean an extra 36,500,000 to 54,750,000 miles driven in the next 100 years, an extra 2 to 4 million gallons of gas burned, extra pollution generated, and extra dollars spent.

Emergency Services

The residents living on the west side of the existing bridge are just as entitled to the county emergency services as residents on the east side. The existing one-lane weight-restricted bridge makes equal services impossible to the west side of the Bitterroot especially over the long term.

Current Legal Liability Problems

Some attorneys state the County now has major legal liabilities from the 90 year old bridge and have informed the County of this extreme legal danger.

Taxpayers Must Speak Up!

County and State officials are wavering on these issues. If we, the taxpayers, do not contact these people making the decision and tell them to USE COMMON SENSE, get the Federal Grant money and build a new \$10 million Maclay Bridge, it won't happen. We will then all be stuck with a \$10 million bill later. Please email and/or phone all the decision makers below:

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**Please scan or fax this page and post in your office/shop/work place or email it to your contacts. Your voice will make a difference!*

**Visit the Maclay Bridge Common Sense Coalition website at: Maclaybridge.com for more information and to download this handout. Our email address is: MBCSC@Maclaybridge.com*