

Resolution 06- 34 of the Gardiner City Council

Whereas, the proposed initiative known as the “Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights” (TABOR) will be put to a vote in the general election on November 7, 2006 as Question 1 on the ballot, and

Whereas, TABOR establishes poorly designed and irrational budget restriction formulas that attempt to dictate the amount of money local voters can raise and spend to provide municipal and school services, directly interfering with local control over crucial budget decisions, and

Whereas, TABOR relies on questionable population and economic data in establishing these annual spending limits, applying one formula to all of Maine’s 489 unique municipalities, and

Whereas, more than 30% of Maine’s cities and towns and 30% of Maine’s school systems would have faced outright budget cuts under TABOR had it been in effect last year, and

Whereas, the TABOR budget restriction formula is particularly irrational and unfair with respect to Maine’s towns and cities that serve as service centers, which tend to be experiencing flat demographic changes but ever-increasing demands for region-wide governmental services, and

Whereas, TABOR would abolish Maine’s long tradition of majority rule by requiring a supermajority 2/3 vote of approval by city council in order to: (1) override the irrational TABOR spending restriction, or (2) increase the property tax rate or any user fee by so much as a penny, or (3) authorize significant capital investments, and

Whereas, TABOR does not allow the voters of Gardiner to adopt an ordinance or local charter that would suspend, repeal or amend any of the budget formulas or governance procedures that are dictated by TABOR, and

Whereas, current law allows any municipality to adopt the TABOR system if the voters of that community choose to do so, without TABOR being imposed from above, and

Whereas, TABOR would restrict the ability of state government to fulfill its obligation to contribute 55% of the cost of K-12 education and maintain other commitments to local government; and

Whereas, TABOR threatens the quality of life not only in our community but across the state of Maine through less investment in transportation and other infrastructure, job creation, research and development, education and public health, and

Whereas, Colorado, the only state that has ever adopted a TABOR system, suspended the core element of TABOR in 2005 because of deteriorating infrastructure, public services and schools, and

Whereas, TABOR would undo Maine’s early progress toward meaningful state tax reform that would provide real tax relief to local property owners within this community:

Now, therefore, the Gardiner City Council hereby resolves:

- a) To oppose TABOR because it is not in the best interests of the residents of the City of Gardiner or the citizens of Maine;
- b) To work to defeat the measure by informing local voters of the potential negative impacts of TABOR on important local services, quality of life and local control over taxes and spending, and
- c) To authorize the city manager and other municipal staff to participate in such activities that are deemed necessary and appropriate in the furtherance of this resolution.

Mayor Brian Rines Ph.D.

Councilor Dennis Doiron

Councilor Lewis Benner

Councilor Phil Hart

Councilor Becky Colwell

Councilor Rich Nickless

Councilor Jean Dellert

Councilor Rich Rambo