

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF A YES VOTE ON PROPOSITION 106

The proposed change in the State Constitution would permit Arizona Cities and Towns the necessary flexibility in their bond programs to acquire -- before it is too late -- the land for parks and open space that will be needed to create a balanced and livable urban environment for the population of the future.

Most Arizona municipalities are growing fast and their officials know they will have to acquire land for parks and open space for the future. The best time to do this is before residential development takes place. It makes good sense to set aside the right piece of land, in the right location for a park or for open space and let the homes and businesses develop around it.

It makes even more sense to buy the land early when it is the least expensive. The taxpayers can save a lot of dollars in the long run.

The problem is financing. Fast-growing municipalities need so many things to keep up with the needs of the people that there is little money available to put into land for future use. The answer is to issue low-interest municipal bonds, buy the land and let the future population -- the folks who are going to use it -- help pay for it.

The State Constitution now sets a limit on the amount of bonds a municipality can issue for most purposes. It says they can't exceed four percent of the assessed valuation of property in the community. By the time most cities have issued bonds for police facilities, fire stations, libraries and other major public facilities there isn't much room left under this limitation for future parks and open space.

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However, the Constitution allows bonds issued for water, lighting and sewer projects to be exempted from the four percent limit and, instead, placed under a special 15 percent limit.

Proposition 106, if approved, would permit bonds for parks, open space and recreational facilities to be issued under the special 15 percent limitation. This would give municipalities the bonding flexibility they need to get ahead of development in parks and open space acquisition.

The voters would still be protected. Each bond issue would have to be approved at the polls by the voters of the individual city or town. Proposition 106 does not authorize bonds for parks, it only changes the limitation on what an individual municipality can issue with the permission of its own voters.

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