



September 28, 2011

Mayor Kooiker and City Council
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Re: Support for Extending Term Lengths for Mayor and Members of City Council

Dear Mayor and Council:


We are writing to express our strong support for extending the term lengths for both the Mayor and for the members of City Council for three key reasons:

1. **Political Stability.** For many constituencies and stakeholder groups, ranging from the business community to city staff to other political entities (municipal, county, state and federal), the current two year terms are not adequate to maintain consistent leadership and vision for the City. There is also a risk of losing institutional memory with the potential dramatic turnover under the current system.
2. **Long Term Strategic Planning.** Rapid City would benefit from having a better long-term vision and plan for how it intends to grow and develop to become the kind of place we want to become. With the potential for half of the council to change every year and for the senior executive of the government to change every 2 years, it becomes even more difficult for a consistent long-range plan to be developed and then executed. Too much volatility and change in leadership usually results in a perpetual short-term mindset that can hamper our ability to make progress.
3. **Better Governance.** Like most organizations with a board of directors, it is important to maintain a good mix of experience and new ideas. The City Council and Mayor serve as a board of directors and chief executive, respectively, and as such must set policy and direction in addition to managing a significant budget. Reducing the number and frequency of city-wide elections would also free up time and resources to governing and less time would be spent on campaigning and running for re-election, resulting in a better return on tax dollars.

Our preference is for the terms to be **increased to a period of 4-years for both Mayor and Council**, commencing with an election cycle in the next 2 years and believe that it is appropriate and preferable to **implement these changes by ordinance.**

Respectfully,


Benjamin L. Snow, President


Al Rieman, Chairman

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