Title: Seize The Initiative!
Author: Yoram Bauman
Analyst: TRR

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure		X		
Plot/Story Line		X		
Character Development		X		
Dialogue		X		
First 20 Pages			X	

	Recommend	Consider	Pass
Script		X	
Writer		X	

Synopsis: Saul, a mid-20s climate activist in Salt Lake City, spends his days gathering signatures for a ballot measure to replace the grocery sales tax with a carbon tax. At a Red Butte Garden concert, he meets Grace, a political science grad student who becomes equally passionate about the campaign. Their romance blossoms through signature-gathering "dates," but crashes when Grace discovers Saul's been using similar flirtatious techniques to recruit other female volunteers. After the campaign fails to gather enough signatures, they reconcile through quirky sandwich-themed apology notes, eventually marry, and commit to trying again with the ballot measure in two years. The story celebrates grassroots democracy, environmental activism, and finding love while fighting for a cause.

Premise: I really like the foundation here - it's refreshingly specific and grounded in something most people never think about: ballot measure campaigns. The sandwich board metaphor running throughout is clever, maybe almost too clever, but it works as a unifying thread. The premise that democracy is messy, exhausting, and requires both optimism and "modest expectations" feels authentic.

However, I think you should consider whether the dual focus - romantic comedy AND political process drama - always serves both stories equally well. Sometimes the

romance feels secondary to the signature-gathering mechanics, other times the political stakes disappear for pages at a time. The strongest scenes are when both elements work together (the Red Butte concert sequence, pages 14-22).

The carbon tax policy itself might be too wonky for general audiences, but you've smartly kept the actual policy discussions brief. What works is making it about people trying to do something, anything, in the face of climate anxiety.

First 20 Pages: Your opening six pages are a masterclass in character introduction. I love how you establish Saul's personality through small actions - not flushing the toilet, the dishwasher comment, the goal thermometer. By page 2, we know exactly who this guy is without heavy exposition.

The extended montage with "Classic Hoagie" playing (pages 2-7) is ambitious and mostly works. The Male Rational Skeptic who reads the entire time and ultimately doesn't sign is a perfect payoff. But I'd recommend trimming some repetition - we get the "your handwriting is beautiful" bit pretty quickly.

Katherine's training sequence (pages 8-13) is fantastic. The "20%, 78%, 2%" breakdown of Dream Signers, Quick Nos, and Oh Nos is memorable and gives the audience a framework for understanding the rest of the film. The chemistry between Saul and Katherine immediately establishes their mentor-student dynamic.

The Red Butte concert setup (pages 14-20) introduces Grace beautifully through Nikki's skepticism. The "sandwich" jokes start here with the "mayonnaise," "Spicy Italian," and "tuna melt" observations - it's cute but maybe one joke too many? Lance's introduction with "Why have just one?!" from the Polygamy Porter label is a great character moment.

One issue: the Lance-Saul interaction (pages 16-18) where Saul fills out Lance's petition feels legally questionable. I know it's played for laughs, but it might raise red flags for anyone familiar with petition law.

Structure: You've got a solid three-act structure with clear turning points. Act One ends around page 30 when they become a team. Act Two runs through the relationship development and campaign struggles, climaxing with Grace discovering Saul's "recruitment tactics" around page 51. Act Three covers the reconciliation and time-jump to their wedding.

The structure's biggest weakness is the extended montage/time-jump section (pages 64-83). That's nearly 20 pages of episodic vignettes with minimal narrative drive. I understand showing their relationship develop, but it feels like we're treading water. The Wiseguys open-mic sequence is entertaining but doesn't move the story forward.

I'd recommend condensing that middle section significantly. We don't need to see every season of their courtship. Pick 2-3 key moments that show relationship growth AND advance the campaign story.

The ending works emotionally but feels a bit rushed. We jump from "campaign is doomed" to "let's try again in 18 months" to wedding day without really dealing with the failure. Lance's Sisyphus conversation (pages 57-63) is supposed to provide that thematic resolution, but it's buried in beer philosophy.

Characters:

Saul - I like that you've made him simultaneously earnest and calculating. He genuinely cares about climate change but also admits he's "doing it to meet hotties." That contradiction makes him interesting. However, his character arc is a bit muddled. What does he actually learn? By the wedding, he's basically the same guy, just married now.

Grace - She's the stronger character because she has clearer growth. From eager volunteer to disillusioned lover to someone who chooses to believe in both democracy and Saul despite their flaws. Her political science background and comedy ambitions add nice texture. The Camus references might be a bit on-the-nose.

Katherine - Absolutely love her. The "Oracle of Doom" who's also weirdly optimistic is a great contradiction. Her training sequences are some of the script's best moments. I think you should give her more screen time in Act Three - she disappears after page 53 until briefly at the wedding.

Lance - He's a riot but almost too quirky. The "everything is like beer" philosophy is funny but gets repetitive. His Sisyphus monologue (pages 60-62) is actually quite beautiful and thematically rich, but it comes from a character who's mostly been comic relief. That tonal shift is jarring.

Nikki - Great supportive friend character. Her skepticism of Saul provides necessary conflict. The reconciliation with Samantha feels tacked on though - we barely know Samantha.

The Clueless Male Roommate, Brinlee, Ashley - These feel undercooked. Brinlee and Ashley especially, since they're name-dropped constantly but barely developed.

Dialogue: Your dialogue is consistently naturalistic and character-specific. Each person has a distinct voice - Lance's "Dude," Katherine's focused intensity, Grace's intellectual references, Nikki's sarcasm.

The Innuendo Game sequences (pages 23-24, 36-38) are playful and sexy without being crude. The Liberty Park scene where Grace flirts while the Argumentative Jerk stands behind her is particularly well-executed.

Some of the political dialogue gets a bit speechy. Grace's open-mic routine (pages 66-71) is clever political science comedy, but it's basically a five-page lecture. It works in the context of a comedy club, but it stops the narrative dead.

The sandwich puns... okay, they're part of the conceit, but there are A LOT of them. "Romaine the girl of my dreams," "lettuce try again," "falafel about what I did" -

individually they're cute, collectively they might trigger groans. I'd recommend cutting about 30% of them.

One specific note: on page 43, the "cisgender capitalist hetero-patriarchy" line feels too scripted for casual conversation, even between politically aware grad students.

Setting: Salt Lake City is beautifully rendered as a character itself. The inversion layer, the mountains, Red Butte Garden, 9th and 9th, the Shoreline Trail - you clearly love this place and it shows. The location specificity (University of Utah, The Pie Pizzeria, Dolcetti Gelato) grounds everything.

The seasonal changes marking time's passage is effective visual storytelling. We feel the campaign stretch from winter through summer through fall.

One missed opportunity: the setting could comment more on Utah's political contradictions. You touch on it (Mormon volunteers for the flag people, Grace's RV-garage-owning father) but don't fully explore the red-state-blue-city tension.

Pacing: The first 40 pages move beautifully. Signature-gathering scenes have great rhythm, alternating between quick rejections and longer interactions. The training sequences break up the monotony effectively.

Pages 40-64 drag considerably. The library make-out flashback (page 42), while fun, doesn't justify its length. The historical ballot measure stories (Howard Henry and parking meters, Tim Eyman) are cute but slow things down.

The campaign failure sequence (pages 52-56) should be more devastating. It happens too quickly - three pages from "this is a disaster" to Saul riding away defeated. Compare that to how much time you spend on lighter romantic moments.

The final 20 pages (wedding sequence) pick up energy again, though the vignette montages feel like padding.

Tone: You're juggling a lot tonally - romantic comedy, political satire, quirky indie film, earnest activism drama. Mostly you pull it off, but there are jarring moments.

The shift from the failed campaign's melancholy (pages 52-64, underscored by sad indie music) to the goofy wedding sequence feels abrupt. We never really process the failure emotionally before jumping to "let's try again in two years!"

Lance's character embodies the tonal challenge. He's simultaneously comic relief (beer philosophy, baseball obsession) and surprisingly insightful (the Sisyphus conversation, the wedding toast about democracy as marriage). Doesn't quite cohere.

The documentary-style ending with real photos and references grounds everything nicely and signals "this matters beyond the rom-com premise."

Transitions: The music cues are extremely specific (you've named exact songs) and function almost like chapter breaks. This works well for the montages but might limit your options in production.

The "MOSTLY SILENT bits" notation appears frequently - pages 23, 30-32, 48-49, 55-56, 63-64, 74, 81-82, 86-88. This is a stylistic choice that works for montages but becomes repetitive. Some of these could be actual scenes with dialogue.

The flashback transitions are clearly marked and work fine, though the library make-out (page 42) and the signature-gathering flashback (pages 12-13) feel redundant - we've already seen Saul's techniques.

The time jumps in the final section need clearer markers. We go from August (page 81) through the following year's seasons (pages 82-83) to the wedding pretty quickly. More specific dating would help.

CONCLUSION: You've written something genuinely original here - a romantic comedy about ballot measure campaigns isn't something I've seen before. The specificity of the world (signature-gathering techniques, petition law, Utah's political landscape) gives it authenticity that elevates the material.

Your strengths are clear: distinctive characters with unique voices, creative use of setting, thematic coherence around democracy and optimism despite long odds. The sandwich metaphor threading through everything is ambitious and mostly pays off.

The main issues are pacing in the middle section and the somewhat rushed emotional resolution of the campaign's failure. Grace discovers Saul's "recruitment tactics," they break up, the campaign fails, but then they reconcile and get married without fully processing any of it. That's a lot of conflict to leave unresolved.

I'd recommend: 1) Condensing the time-jump montages by about 30-40%, 2) Giving the campaign failure more emotional weight, 3) Clarifying what Saul actually learns/how he changes, and 4) Maybe cutting a few sandwich puns (I know, they're fun, but there's such a thing as too much of a good thing).

This script has real potential. It's smart without being pretentious, romantic without being saccharine, and politically engaged without being preachy. With some structural tightening and deeper emotional mining of the central conflicts, this could be a really special indie film. The kind that plays well at Sundance and finds its audience through word-of-mouth.

Keep pushing it. The bones are solid, now it’s about refining the execution.