Montana Legislative Services Division

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To: HB 642 Select Committee on Efficiency in Government

From: Susan Byorth Fox, Executive Director
        Legislative Services Division

Re: Montana Data Center and plans for Legislative Branch

I have been asked about the Legislative Branch's plans to move our servers to the Montana Data Center and I would like to share with you our plans and our concerns about moving forward.

> In summary, we house approximately two-thirds of our IT services with ITSD at this time. By the end of the summer we will house up to 75% of our services as there are plans to move the disaster recovery environment when our current projects are completed. At this time, we do not have additional services that we believe can be housed at the Data Center, mostly due to the need for the Legislative Branch to maintain its separation and independence for legislative processes. As technology advances, continued analysis is recommended to determine if or when other IT services could be housed with the Data Center.

As background, statutorily I am responsible for providing information technology (IT) services to the Legislative Branch, including network support services, application support and development, communications support and coordination, and IT planning. Within the Legislative Services Division is the Office of Legislative Information Technology that supports the House, the Senate, and the three permanent staff divisions. Statutorily, I am the presiding officer of the Legislative Branch Computer System Planning Council that is responsible for the Legislative Branch Computer System Plan including broad policy needs, long-term direction for computer use, and the effective implementation of detailed planning. I also represent the Legislative Branch on the Information Technology Board administered by the Department of Administration.

The Computer System Planning Council has representation by the Secretary of the Senate, Chief Clerk of the House, the Sergeants-at-arms or other representatives of each chamber as appointed by the respective presiding officer, the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, the Legislative Auditor, the Consumer Counsel, and a nonvoting member designated by the director of the Department of Administration. Dick Clark, CIO of the Executive Branch, has served in this capacity for the past 6 years, and he has regular communications with the Legislative Branch's CIO, Hank Trenk.

The Computer System Planning Council briefly discussed the Data Center at its last meeting and encouraged me to share information with you. In addition, the Legislative Branch Computer System Plan, including the proposed IT budget for the next biennium, must be approved and adopted by the Legislative Council. Therefore, any recommendations affecting IT for the Legislative Branch should be forwarded to these two committees for consideration.

Neither the Legislative Branch nor the Judicial Branch is covered under the Montana Information Technology Act, which applies to the Executive Branch. As we purchase services from ITSD, we must adhere to the conditions, but the enforcement and compliance cannot apply. However, the

Legislative and Judicial Branches are required to submit their respective IT plans to the department. And statute states, "To the extent possible…both current and future applications should be coordinated and compatible with the standards and goals of the executive branch as expressed in the state strategic information technology plan provided for in 2-17-521, as well as the Legislative Branch standards developed" for the Legislative Branch. (5-11-403, MCA)

We work diligently to provide the Legislature with high quality IT services within reasonable costs. We depend on ITSD and purchase many services. We have housed our mainframe services successfully with ITSD for over 30 years and our LAWS Oracle databases reside in ITSD--both housed in the Data Center. In addition, we use the Outlook e-mail system and share MBARS and SABHRs with the Executive Branch--all of which are housed in the Data Center. We also participate in the ITSD rate structure for other IT, AV, and telephone services.

The Legislative Branch server environment consists of a mix of numerous, integrated, physical and virtual servers for these IT functions: House and Senate vote systems, audio broadcast encoders and streamers, Citrix for remote access, file and print services, web servers, utility and backup servers, authentication, and disaster recovery. An identification of "mission critical" IT functions is needed to analyze if the Legislative Branch can place any additional servers into a shared environment. We previously had web servers with ITSD and it was mutually decided that it was best that we bring them back under our own roof. Other states have tried moving vote system servers off-site and encountered multiple failures and the servers were returned on site.

The timeline for migrating any Legislative Branch servers to the Data Center is affected by numerous projects that are in progress[1]. These projects are the foundation of our network and movement of any servers in the middle of these projects would require duplicate work to be conducted. After the projects are accomplished, our plan is to move our Disaster Recovery Servers to the ITSD Data Center in June or July of 2012. We currently have money in our budget to move the disaster recovery servers after the current projects are completed. After the 2013 session, if the disaster recovery server move proves to be beneficial for the Legislative Branch, we could proceed with moving the Disaster Recovery Servers to the Miles City facility.

At this time, the Legislative Branch IT staff does not recommend moving other production environment servers. The activities to support the 2013 session begin in earnest in the fall of 2012. Having the disaster recovery servers in place in the Data Center provides ideal timing and, although an actual event happening during session is not anticipated, the Legislature would be in a perfect position to test the recovery using the Data Center servers. With the Disaster Recovery servers at the data Center, approximately 75% of our IT services will be housed with ITSD.

In addition, we have made significant server room improvements in the Capitol Building (app. $28,000) that also has served the Governor's Office and the Secretary of State's Office. We have also funded other IT improvements in the Capitol building for all occupants and that investment continues to serve us well in maintaining our mission critical servers on-site. We continue to reduce costs as

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[1] Active Directory conversion, system center configuration manager conversion and operations manager installation, Windows 7 conversion, SQL database, 802.1x conversion, and IP address subnet move.

possible through redesign and other efficiencies.

IT services are intended to serve the business processes and we see both pros and cons to moving additional Legislative Branch servers to the Data Center. As Executive Director for the Branch centralized services, it is my responsibility to ensure that the work of the Legislative Branch can be accomplished on time and not disrupted or made subservient to the IT environment. The analysis of each service to determine how critical it is to the Legislative process and mission and the need to maintain independence and control is vital to making these decisions. The work that has been accomplished to date to provide firewalls and other security features must be maintained and movement of some services to the Data Center may be problematic. There are also services for which a centralized Data Center is not advisable or available, such as tape back-up, authentication, or virtual desktop servers.

On the positive side, the Data Center could provide a stable environment in terms of power, security, ventilation, etc. We believe that a trial period to ensure we have the access that would be needed and the Disaster Recovery environment will provide that test. We need further information on the restrictions that will be placed on entities outside of ITSD and should learn more as security incidents and other real world situations occur. However, even in a power outage, the branch would be without network services due to switch outages in the Capitol, but the Data Center could provide a stable power environment that would keep our servers operational and no additional network uptime would be realized.

As the Legislative Branch IT services are analyzed for future housing at the Data Center, we may be able to negotiate many of the concerns through a service level agreement. Some of the concerns identified to date include:

•   ITSD would have physical access to Branch data/servers and that raises security concerns. We would need to enter into an agreement that legislative data would be secure, a protocol regarding access and notification, auditing of access, and appropriate security measures.
•   Moving to the Data Center increases the points of potential failure by adding multiple routing points outside of the Capitol, increasing the chance for downtime. There is a need for prior notification to limit or adjust the ITSD maintenance schedules during session to accommodate the Legislature's unique business processes.
•   Increased outage response time. When outages occur we would need to travel to the Data Center to gain access and resolve the issue. We need a protocol on how to access our servers in a timely manner.
•   We would have fewer environmental controls on legislative servers which subject us to ITSD's maintenance of the Data Center. Currently, we have quick response ability to changing environmental conditions. During an emergency scenario, we would be subject to ITSD's decisions on the timing and the extent of communication of the incident and would require assurances and protocols on response time and notification of an incident.

Another major concern is the additional costs to reside at the Data Center under the current rate structure. We believe we need between 2 to 3 racks to house the legislative servers and disaster recovery environments. We would need to continue to occupy the bunker for Audio Visual equipment and have a footprint in the current server room for which we are charged by Department of Administration. It is currently unknown if the Branch would realize any cost savings and, if there

are, would any savings be credited to the Branch or offset the increased costs of residing at the Data Center?

Currently, we are a customer of ITSD for two-thirds of our IT services, but as a separate branch of government as is the Judicial Branch, the unique functions and concerns may not be able to be addressed sufficiently to move more services. In addition, both the Legislative and Judicial Branches are relatively small in size and it may not be cost-effective for ITSD to have to provide different services to accommodate the needs of separate branches. We would like to be a partner with ITSD in support of our unique needs as a Legislative Branch. Current needs for increased service include increased communication from ITSD on maintenance schedules to limit its negative effects, processes on implementing timely changes in our environment, and inclusion in communications and decisions on environmental impacts and future enhancements. We have little control of the environment outside of the Capitol and are concerned that moving to the Data Center will further reduce control over the Legislative IT environment. Increased reliance on ITSD for services would require us to institutionalize a process for discussions on how services are provided and for recourse if we cannot receive timely services to support the Legislative Branch functions.

The Data Center has exceptional features and we understand your desire to use them to the fullest. I support the cost-benefit analysis of the Legislative Branch server environment similar to that which is being conducted on Executive Branch agencies. I support the data center concept and look forward to our test run with the disaster recovery environment. I feel strongly that any movement of our production environment needs further analysis and negotiations would have to occur on the level of services required to resolve our concerns. Formal, institutional solutions are needed because the agreements must govern regardless of administrations in either Branch. I believe that these concerns are reasonable given the level of reliance we would be accepting from a separate branch of government. Within our time line, we should be able to learn from the Executive Branch agencies that have moved or will be moving prior to any move that the Legislative Branch makes.

In the end, it is my belief that the Legislative Branch must retain control over the Legislative Branch processes and respective IT services and not cede authority to an Executive Branch agency in order to receive IT services. I look forward to working further with you on this issue. If you have any further questions, I would be happy to respond.

Sincerely,

Susan Byorth Fox
Executive Director

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