

SUMMARY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION

LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE
MAXWELL PARSON – JULY 10, 2025

2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2025 Legislature acted on several bills involving local government related issues and topics. This summary provides an overview of major legislation, excluding the budget provisions of House Bill 2, in the following areas:

Budget & Accounting
County & Municipal Officers
Elections
Land Use & Planning
Local Government Powers

Special Districts
State Funding of Local Projects
Taxes, Fees, & Finance
Miscellaneous
Vetoed Legislation

Public Safety & Courts

Except for vetoed legislation, this summary only includes legislation approved by the Legislature that has become law.

BUDGET & ACCOUNTING

[HB 37](#) – Requires preliminary operating budgets to include the previous year’s property taxes levied on \$100,000 of residential property and an estimate of the property taxes to be levied on \$100,000 of residential property in the current budget year

[HB 625](#) – Withholds entitlement share for noncompliance with child abuse reporting requirements

[HB 846](#) – Provides for reimbursement of “isolated pupils” to a school district in certain situations

[SB 56](#) – Generally revises retirement contribution rate for certain public employees

[SB 236](#) – Generally revises county detention officer salaries and payment

COUNTY & MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

[HB 68](#) – Allows County Commissioners to initiate Mandamus proceedings against a local government entity within the county

[HB 716](#) – Revises requirements for election or appointment to a county water and sewer board of directors

[SB 5](#) – Revises compensation for county tax appeal board members

[SB 12](#) – Eliminates boards of county printing and transfers duties to the Department of Administration

ELECTIONS

[HB 293](#) – Requires appointed election administrators to report to the governing body of a county

[HB 406](#) – Revises certain school district elections to align with local government election dates

[SB 11](#) – Generally revises local government ballot initiative and issue laws

[SB 57](#) – Revises the county canvassing process to require investigations of discrepancies and errors

LAND USE AND PLANNING

[HB 180](#) – Prohibits a local board of health from approving mixing zones that approach on adjacent property

[HB 233](#) – Providing for the transfer of a title for open spaces in a final plat to a HOA

[HB 318](#) – Requiring local boards of health to implement an appeal process for certain sewage disposal system requirements

[HB 427](#) – Requires local building departments to provide the text/citation of specific sections of building code relied on to delay a permit application or halt a construction project

[HB 492](#) – Prohibits certain minimum parking zoning requirements

[HB 520](#) – Provides certain exemption from subdivision requirements and zoning regulations for family transfer parcels

[HB 534](#) – Allows for county water and/or sewer districts to connect to a system beyond capacity in certain situations

[HB 614](#) – Allows for the termination of a zoning district if the county has opted into MLUPA or if the zones are nested

[HB 629](#) – Requires County or Municipal water or sewer systems accept a subdivisions request for connection in certain circumstances

[HB 681](#) – Generally revises laws related to local regulation of determination of water availability for subdivisions

[HB 713](#) – Generally revises zoning establishment, amending, and repealing methods

[HB 714](#) – Generally revises laws related evasion of subdivision review

[SB 10](#) – Extends timelines related to onsite inspections during a state of emergency

[SB 33](#) – Provides that any building owned by a state agency are subject to review by the Department of Labor and Industry rather than the local jurisdiction

[SB 121](#) – Generally revises MLUPA provisions

[SB 174](#) – Requires recreational vehicles and mobile homes to be considered buildings for lease/rent for subdivision reviews

[SB 175](#) – Allows for streamlined public hearing notices when revising zoning regulations

[SB 213](#) – Allows for single stairwells in certain buildings

[SB 214](#) – Provides that in cases of ambiguity the current use of the land must be interpreted favorably regarding zoning laws

[SB 243](#) – Prohibits building height restrictions via zoning for certain municipalities

[SB 252](#) – Requires local entities to treat factory-built housing the same as other types of residential property regarding zoning regulations

[SB 262](#) – Exempts certain subdivision water/sewer plans from environmental review

[SB 275](#) – Allows for the revocation of agricultural covenants on lands annexed into a municipality

[SB 532](#) – Revises county zoning laws to allow for accessory dwelling units

LOCAL GOVERNMENT POWERS

[HB 208](#) – Provides authority for municipalities to regulate unauthorized occupancy of municipal property

[HB 323](#) – Allows counties to compensate reserve deputy sheriff's officers

[HB 443](#) – Provides for county management of transient retail merchants

[HB 561](#) – Repeals county licensing of itinerant vendors

[HB 809](#) – Prohibits local governments from enacting "red flag" gun laws

PUBLIC SAFETY & COURTS

[HB 46](#) – Provides that requirements for changing an attorney do not apply to public defenders appointed under the Montana Public Defender Act

[HB 333](#) – Allows third class city and towns to contract another entities police department to provide local services

[HB 475](#) – Regulates the use of restraints on inmates giving birth

[HB 486](#) – Increases the rate at which deputy sheriff compensation is calculated

[HB 742](#) – Revises laws related to public nuisance and requires a minimum complain threshold prior to inspection

[HB 888](#) – Prohibits a board of health from requiring vaccinations, medications, or treatments

[SB 398](#) – Increases the cap for collections related to actions brought before a municipal court

[SB 428](#) – Revises County speed limits

[SB 69](#) – Revises reporting requirements related to child sexual abuse for county attorneys

SPECIAL DISTRICTS

[HB 19](#) – Requires a public hearing prior to a tax increment financing district (TIF) termination date being extended

[HB 159](#) – Allowing for rural improvement districts to be used and created for maintenance of existing improvements

[HB 567](#) – Allows school districts more flexibility in entering into multidistrict agreements

[HB 606](#) – Generally revises laws related to school district reorganization

[HB 764](#) – Generally revises laws related to public transportation district creation, expansion, and participation

[SB 77](#) – Requires conservation districts to comply with state procurement laws when using state money

[SB 260](#) – Generally revises the process for altering district boundaries related to a public service

[HB 621](#) – Allows a local first response entity to establish a peer support program

STATE FUNDING OF LOCAL PROJECTS

[HB 6](#) – Establishes and appropriates grant funds for a variety of renewable resource projects

[HB 16](#) – Removes eligibility for increasing wages of existing employees and employers and prohibits the infrastructure tax fee from being claimed as a tax credit in relation to the Infrastructure Loan Program.

TAXES, FEES, & FINANCE

[HB 20](#) – Requires voted levies to be stated in dollars rather than mills and allows for voted levies to still be subject to 15-10-420(1)(a), MCA

[HB 90](#) – Provides all noncentrally assessed property be revalued every two years

[HB 140](#) – Provides for property tax assistance for injured first responders and/or their surviving family

[HB 156](#) – Replaces school district base levies with county-wide base levies

[HB 162](#) – Allows workforce and community housing to be built with revenue from a resort tax

[HB 192](#) – Increases County Clerk and Recorder fees

[HB 231](#) – Generally revises property tax rates

[HB 308](#) – Extends the distribution metal mines license tax collections to counties until 2035

[HB 329](#) – Removes the sunset from the Montana ammunition act

- [HB 411](#) – Exempts agricultural property from open space levies and property taxes pledged to the payment of bonds
- [HB 483](#) – Generally revises property tax law and provides that school levies are not subject to 15-10-420, MCA
- [HB 920](#) – Provides a property tax exemption for senior care facilities under certain situations
- [SB 3](#) – Requires an advisory committee for TIF districts
- [SB 103](#) – Revises the fee for issuing an execution or order of sale on a foreclosure of lien
- [SB 117](#) – Revises the limitation on local government property tax increases
- [SB 133](#) – Generally limits impact fee adjustment rates
- [SB 172](#) – Allows workforce housing to be built with revenue from a resort tax
- [SB 247](#) – Revises property class and tax rate for shooting ranges
- [SB 289](#) – Requires counties be notified for certain proposed property tax adjustments
- [SB 328](#) – Revises the deadline for an appeal of a decision by a county tax appeal board
- [SB 337](#) – Provides a 5-year prepaid property tax exemption during subdivision development
- [SB 404](#) – Requires the reporting of building permits for appraisal information
- [SB 458](#) – Allows for public safety and resiliency improvement projects to be funded through commercial property-assessed capital enhancements programs
- [SB 542](#) – Generally revises property tax laws
- [SB 550](#) – Revises taxation of certain telecommunications property
- [HB 40](#) – Generally revises public water supply fee accounts and creates a state special revenue account

MISCELLANEOUS

- [HB 100](#) – Revises public record request and fulfillment laws
- [HB 122](#) – Revises right-of-way laws for utilities to include natural gas pipelines
- [HB 393](#) – Requires towns with a population greater than 300 to record meetings in an audio format
- [HB 394](#) – Generally revises public notice and hearing requirements
- [HB 430](#) – Repeals process to establish a county owned scale
- [HB 523](#) – Provides for the disposition of abandoned lots in public cemeteries

[HB 648](#) – Requires FWP to notify local entities prior to the release or relocation of a large predator

[HB 683](#) – Revises conflict of interest laws for certain local government contracts

[HB 767](#) – Allows for the establishment of a predatory animal control program for the protection of goats

[SB 1](#) – Revises the definition of blighted area for urban renewal and TIF purposes

[SB 168](#) – Creates a statute of limitations and expedited permit process for lakeshore construction projects

[SB 362](#) – Revises firefighter qualifications

VETOED LEGISLATION

[HB 547](#) – Removes language related to existing volunteer fire departments in consolidated city-county government boundaries

[HB 643](#) – Revises reimbursement costs to detention centers holding inmates in state custody

[HB 901](#) – Creates a fire department health and safety grant program

[SB 239](#) – Requires judges to invite amicus briefing and allow intervention in certain civil cases

FINAL STATUS OF 2023-2024 LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE BILLS

Bill	Short Title	Status
HB 21	Establish a Montana Workforce Housing Tax Credit	Tabled in Committee
HB 37	Revise property tax information required in preliminary budgets	Chapter Number Assigned
HB 38	Revise laws related to disability parking	Chapter Number assigned
HB 68	Authorize county commissioners to initiate mandamus proceedings	Chapter Number assigned