

## Text of 2025 Study Bill and Resolutions

HB 70	Study of wildland firefighting
HJ 04	Interim study on artificial intelligence
HJ 23	Interim study on youth court laws
HJ 26	Study guardianships and conservatorships
HJ 27	Interim study on laws regarding morticians and funeral services
HJ 28	Interim study to identify and improve access to federal grant opportunities for the state of Montana, tribal governments, and local government entities
HJ 30	Study resolution on incentivizing housing density and affordability
HJ 32	Interim study of advanced investigator qualifications for law enforcement
HJ 40	Interim study on transferring fiscal note production from executive branch to legislative branch
HJ 42	Interim study on procurement, no-bid contracts, and transparency on no-bid purchases
HJ 44	Interim study of endocrine-disrupting chemicals and water quality
HJ 45	Interim study on the impact collateral consequences have on criminal record expungement
HJ 47	Study resolution on local government entity cooperation
HJ 48	Interim study on moving the date of the primary election
HJ 50	Interim study of uniform common interest ownership laws
HJ 52	Interim study on Montana cattle industry
HJ 53	Request an interim study on school safety
HJ 55	Study resolution on property management licensing and practice
HJ 56	Study resolution of search and rescue services and funding
HJ 61	Interim study on the property insurance market in Montana
HJ 62	Study resolution on wildfire safety
HJ 74	Study resolution analyzing water re-use in the state
SJ 08	Request interim study of property tax special districts
SJ 11	Interim study on farmer's markets and food systems
SJ 12	Interim study on energy transmission

SJ 13	Study resolution for emergency medical services
SJ 19	Joint resolution to study public transportation
SJ 21	Interim study on interstate power grid development
SJ 28	Interim study resolution on the legislature's ethics processes
SJ 29	Interim study resolution on coordinating efforts between OPI and DPHHS in addressing the impacts on children of prenatal exposure to meth and fentanyl
SJ 33	Interim study of the prescription drug supply chain
SJ 35	Interim study of voter list maintenance and integrity
SJ 36	Study dependent neglect standards for prosecutors
SJ 37	Interim survey of behavioral health services in Montana
SJ 42	Interim study of noxious weed control
SJ 48	Interim study of the public health and safety impacts of marijuana legalization
SJ 49	Interim study of youth and family behavioral health prevention



AN ACT REQUIRING A STUDY OF STATE FIRE SUPPRESSION ISSUES, METHODS, AND COSTS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; ESTABLISHING REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING FOR CONTINGENT VOIDNESS; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE.

WHEREAS, since the destructive Big Burn of 1910, federal wildfire policy has been to suppress fires at all costs, resulting in forests that are overstocked with fuel; and

WHEREAS, wildfires now consume twice as much land each year on average than in the 1990s, a trend expected to continue; and

WHEREAS, more than one-third of Montana homes are exposed to moderate to high wildfire risk; and

WHEREAS, a variety of factors have exacerbated the risks, including regulatory red tape, incomplete government partnerships, unexplored economic benefits, and unrecognized risk sharing; and

WHEREAS, environmental reviews, endangered species concerns, and pernicious litigation prevent necessary mechanical treatment and prescribed burns, which could lessen ladder and canopy fuels, reduce fuel loads, and improve habitat; and

WHEREAS, profitable markets for shrubs and small-diameter trees may be developed in engineered-wood plants to produce oriented-strand board, biochar, or wood chips; and

WHEREAS, use of prescribed fires as a management tool should be encouraged, perhaps as a recognized property right, expanded liability protections, or certified burning; and

WHEREAS, controlled livestock grazing can be an effective tool for managing fuel loads; and

WHEREAS, as the number of homes in areas with moderate or high wildfire risk has doubled since 1990, volunteer, local, state, and federal authorities are faced with protecting these structures; and

WHEREAS, improved cooperation between states, tribes, and counties can together improve forest health and reduce wildfire risk; and

WHEREAS, use of all resources should be examined to maximize private, local government, and state fire resources; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature, which sets policy for and pays for much of the wildland firefighting on behalf of state taxpayers, has not fully examined these and other related issues since 2009.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1. Study of state fire suppression issues, methods, and costs.** (1) The environmental quality council provided for in 5-16-101 shall conduct a comprehensive fire suppression study.

(2) The study must include an investigation of:

(a) firefighting operations in Montana by the state and federal governments, including operations on tribal land and private land, and the management policies affecting the success of those operations;

(b) the efficient use of fire suppression resources, including equipment and firefighters;

(c) the impact of operations on private land and the effective use of private resources to fight fires;

and

(d) state and federal forest management and grazing policies and how those policies may potentially affect the number of wildfires, safety risk to firefighters, or fire suppression efforts.

(3) The environmental quality council shall complete the study by September 15, 2026, and report its findings and recommendations, including legislation, to the 70th legislature.

**Section 2. Appropriation.** There is appropriated \$50,000 from the general fund to the legislative services division for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, to pay for costs associated with the study required under [section 1.]

**Section 3. Contingent voidness.** (1) Pursuant to Joint Rule 40-65, if [this act] does not include an appropriation prior to being transmitted to the governor, then [this act] is void.

(2) If the appropriation in [section 2] is vetoed, then [this act] is void.

**Section 4. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

**Section 5. Termination.** [This act] terminates December 31, 2026.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

WHEREAS, artificial intelligence is a current and evolving technology having significant impacts on society; and

WHEREAS, many states have conducted studies, formed committees or task forces, developed regulations, and established laws in relation to artificial intelligence; and

WHEREAS, artificial intelligence should be studied to ensure its proper application and regulation in the state of Montana.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) examine current laws or regulations within this state, other states, and the federal government that have aided in creating regulatory structures for artificial intelligence and whether these measures are or would be similarly effective in this state;
- (2) using other state models, research an artificial intelligence code of ethics to be used by state agencies and an artificial intelligence bill of rights applicable to citizens;
- (3) examine transparency and disclosure requirements as well as civil and criminal liability for entities that develop or deploy artificial intelligence systems; and
- (4) assess the benefits and risks of artificial intelligence to state agencies and to the rights and interests of Montana residents, including the impact of artificial intelligence on employment, constitutional and

legal rights, privacy interests, and economic welfare in this state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO REVIEW, SIMPLIFY, AND STREAMLINE THE MONTANA YOUTH COURT ACT; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Article II, section 15, of the Montana Constitution provides that the rights of persons under 18 years of age must include all the fundamental rights of adults unless specifically precluded by laws that enhance the protections of these persons; and

WHEREAS, when a youth commits an act that would constitute a crime if committed by an adult, the Montana Legislature has adopted the Montana Youth Court Act to address, adjudicate, and dispose of these issues; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Youth Court Act provides in section 41-5-102, MCA, that the Act must be interpreted and construed to preserve unity and welfare with the family, reduce youth delinquency, provide consistent consequences for the youth's actions, and provide judicial hearings that ensure the parties a fair, accurate hearing and recognition of their constitutional and statutory rights; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Youth Court Act has been repeatedly amended since its adoption in 1947; and

WHEREAS, in the course of amending the Montana Youth Court Act over the decades, the text has become unwieldy and cluttered and now consists of 13 parts of various sizes with multiple cross-references across the Act; and

WHEREAS, the complexity of the Montana Youth Court Act is now exceeding the complexity of the criminal code for adults; and

WHEREAS, as an example of this complexity, there are multiple decision points as to whether charges



should be filed in district court, youth court, or resolved informally without court involvement; and

WHEREAS, as another example of complexity, charging decisions are based on multiple factors, such as the nature of the offense, the youth's age, the discretion or lack of discretion of the county attorney, and the opportunity for a "transfer hearing" to move some or all of the charges to district court or youth court, creating a trial within a trial; and

WHEREAS, as another example of complexity, there are a variety of dispositions unique to the Montana Youth Court Act, such as consent decree, consent adjustment with petition, consent adjustment without petition, disposition in violation of consent adjustment, commitment to department, and extended jurisdiction juvenile; and

WHEREAS, as another example of complexity, there is a confusing series of laws regarding supervision when a youth becomes an adult, such as a "208 transfer," an extended jurisdiction prosecution, and the Criminally Convicted Youth Act; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this complexity, a juvenile proceeding was reversed by the Montana Supreme Court for a failure to follow this complex procedure in *Matter of C.L.*, 2021 MT 294 (DA 20-0155), which involved a briefing that included a full-page flowchart to explain the youth court adjudication process; and

WHEREAS, a review, simplification, and clean-up of the Montana Youth Court Act would provide clarity to judges, county attorneys, the legal profession, and families; and

WHEREAS, a streamlined and simplified Act would better fulfill the purposes provided in section 41-5-102, MCA; and

WHEREAS, a simplified Act will still provide accountability for the youth's actions and protect the rights of all parties by ensuring fair and accurate hearings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to review and propose legislation to simplify and streamline the Montana Youth Court Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall include input from county attorneys, the court

administrator, youth court services personnel, district court judges and personnel, youth probation officers, the director or designee of the Office of the Public Defender, the director or designee of the Department of Public Health and Human Services, and the director or designee of the Department of Corrections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that any changes proposed as a result of the committee's study should remain consistent with the legislative purposes enumerated in section 41-5-102, MCA, should not be driven by policy intended to increase punishment of youth, and should focus primarily on procedure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF GUARDIANSHIP ISSUES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana has established a system of guardianships and conservatorships to protect people and their property when they cannot protect themselves; and

WHEREAS, court-appointed guardians and conservators are often untrained and lack experience to perform their duties; and

WHEREAS, there have even been cases of experienced conservators committing acts of malfeasance; and

WHEREAS, the system established in Montana to protect people who need protection is often not protecting them; and

WHEREAS, Oregon has a Conservatorship Audit Program housed in the Attorney General's Office to assist courts to understand and assess guardianship and conservatorship case filings; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, Minnesota established a Conservator Account Auditing Program in the Judicial Branch to improve conservatorship oversight and reduce administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, several states provide licensing or certification and training of guardians and conservators.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to study guardianship issues in Montana, including but not limited to training, licensing, certification, and auditing of guardians and conservators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study:

- (1) review existing resources in Montana for guardians and conservators;
- (2) examine programs other states use to train, license, certify, and audit guardians and conservators;
- (3) identify potential costs of programs and funding sources;
- (4) determine where a Montana program should be placed for administrative purposes; and
- (5) involve input and feedback from stakeholders, including but not limited to guardians, conservators, family members of those needing assistance, organizations involved in supporting guardians and incapacitated individuals, judges, staff from the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice, and any other stakeholders considered relevant by the committee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON MORTICIANS AND FUNERAL SERVICES; EXAMINING WAYS TO IMPROVE CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY OF EXISTING STATUTE; RESEARCHING AND PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR OTHER METHODS OF FINAL DISPOSITION TO BE ADDED TO STATUTE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, existing statutes regarding the final disposition of a deceased human body are spread across no less than seven different titles in the Montana Code Annotated; and

WHEREAS, existing statute does not include provisions for other methods of final disposition of a deceased human body, including natural organic reduction or alkaline hydrolysis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) examine current statutes and department rules related to the final disposition of a deceased human body, including but not limited to:
  - (a) public cemetery services in Title 7, chapter 35, MCA;
  - (b) burial sites and human remains in Title 22, chapter 3, MCA;
  - (c) cemetery associations and mausoleum-columbarium authorities in Title 35, chapters 20 and 21, MCA;
  - (d) licensure of morticians, funeral service providers, and other related professions in Title 37,

MCA;

(e) health and safety standards involved with cadavers, autopsies, and determination of death in Title 50, chapters 21 and 22, MCA;

(f) disposition rights, intestate succession, and anatomical gifts in Title 72, chapters 9, 11, and 17, MCA; and

(g) air quality permits for crematory facilities in Title 75, chapter 2, part 2, MCA.

(2) examine how other states have incorporated new technology for final disposition of deceased human bodies into existing statute, including organization and definitions;

(3) research currently available final disposition technologies, including natural organic reduction and alkaline hydrolysis, that are not provided for in statute or department rules;

(4) propose legislation to:

(a) update terminology and definitions to be consistent with current industry standard practice;

(b) modernize and reorganize archaic language for conformity with the bill drafting manual; and

(c) build a framework for new final disposition methods and technologies to be added into statute during future legislative sessions;

(5) collaborate on this issue with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to:

(a) mortuary science professionals;

(b) crematory process professionals;

(c) representatives of each federally recognized tribal government in Montana;

(d) representatives of the board of funeral service established in section 2-15-1743, MCA;

(e) representatives of the Montana Funeral Directors Association;

(f) city or county public health experts; and

(g) representatives with expertise in other final disposition methods, including natural organic reduction and alkaline hydrolysis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO IDENTIFY AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE STATE OF MONTANA, TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, although many state agencies have successfully secured significant federal grant funding, feedback from constituents indicates that many grant opportunities remain unused; and

WHEREAS, local government entities, especially in small communities and tribal and rural areas of the state, lack the capacity to identify and pursue grant funding; and

WHEREAS, a concerted state approach to identifying and securing federal grants may yield significant revenue opportunities for public needs and potentially reduce the proportion of state tax revenue dedicated to those needs, allowing investment of revenue into other areas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) identify federal grant funding opportunities that have been available to state, tribal, and local government entities since 2020;
- (2) identify which of the federal grant funding opportunities pursuant to subsection (1) that state, tribal, and local government entities currently utilize;
- (3) identify federal grant funding opportunities pursuant to subsection (1) that are either unutilized



or underutilized;

(4) evaluate why certain federal grant funding opportunities pursuant to subsection (1) are consistently and successfully utilized and why others are not;

(5) investigate the existence of any disparities that may be faced by small, tribal, and rural government entities when seeking to identify and secure federal grant funding opportunities pursuant to subsection (1) compared to the state's larger and more urban entities; and

(6) recommend strategies and resources that may enhance federal grant acquisition at the state, tribal, and local levels, including addressing any disparities between all levels of state government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee work with stakeholders, including executive agencies, tribal governments, local government representatives, and federal government representatives to offer input and proposals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF METHODS TO INCREASE HOUSING DENSITY AND AFFORDABILITY; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana communities are in dire need of quality housing supported by sustainable infrastructure, including housing for workers, new families, people seeking to age in place, and people seeking entry-level homes; and

WHEREAS, state government, local governments, and housing developers have a mutual responsibility to investigate paths for addressing the lack of housing in Montana; and

WHEREAS, increasing housing density and building workforce housing, starter homes, and homes for people aging in place requires meaningful partnerships between developers and local governments and a buyer market with the financial means to purchase newly developed homes; and

WHEREAS, increasing housing density also increases the overall taxable value for each acre of housing developments while reducing the tax burden on individual home owners residing within the development; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's bipartisan housing task force has prioritized policies that encourage housing density and the development of housing that is attainable at every income level.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) conduct a meaningful and robust investigation into methods to incentivize increased housing density at the local level;
- (2) review state programs to support increased housing units supported by existing and new infrastructure;
- (3) analyze the economic implications of increased housing availability created by increased housing density, including potential property tax implications for individual home owners and the taxable value of new and existing developments;
- (4) identify programs that provide financial means for local governments to improve key water and wastewater systems; and
- (5) investigate methods or programs to encourage greater density in housing developments that utilize city infrastructure.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to for-profit and nonprofit housing developers, local governments, housing advocates, and appropriate state department staff.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINING AND THE QUALIFICATIONS OF INVESTIGATORS WITHIN MONTANA LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, victims of serious crimes in Montana deserve to have those crimes investigated by members of law enforcement with training and expertise specific to those offenses; and

WHEREAS, according to the most recent Montana Law Enforcement Employment Survey administered by the Montana Board of Crime Control, there are approximately 117 law enforcement agencies across Montana, which are made up of officers with varying levels of training and experience in advanced investigation techniques; and

WHEREAS, of the 55 county sheriff's departments in Montana, 16 of those departments employ five or fewer law enforcement officers, and of the 46 municipal police departments, 22 employ five or fewer officers; and

WHEREAS, investigations of sexual assaults and homicides demand a higher level of training and skill than is acquired by obtaining a basic POST certification from the Public Safety Officer Standards and Training Council; and

WHEREAS, requiring law enforcement officers to receive advanced training increases the probability of successful resolutions to sexual assault and homicide cases and helps to avoid false charges and inadequate case preparation and decreases the likelihood of a successful appeal following a conviction.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) review training opportunities related to investigating serious crimes, including homicide and related offenses as described in Title 45, chapter 5, part 1, and sexual crimes as described in Title 45, chapter 5, part 5, that are currently available to Montana peace officers;
- (2) survey Montana law enforcement agencies and review the availability and quantity of peace officers who are qualified to investigate the crimes enumerated in subsection (1); and
- (3) examine opportunities to increase the number of qualified investigators in Montana and, if necessary, consider legislation to help mitigate current deficiencies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITY FOR PRODUCING FISCAL NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Title 5, chapter 4, part 2, governs the production of fiscal notes for legislative bills; and

WHEREAS, section 5-4-201, MCA, provides that "[a]ll bills reported out of a committee of the legislature having an effect on the revenues, expenditures, or fiscal liability of the state or of a county or municipality, except appropriation measures carrying specific dollar amounts, shall include a fiscal note incorporating an estimate of such effect. Fiscal notes shall be requested by the presiding officer of either house, who shall determine the need for the note at the time of introduction"; and

WHEREAS, section 5-4-203, MCA, provides that "[t]he budget director, in cooperation with the state or local agencies or officials or organizations representing local agencies or officials affected by the bill, is responsible for the preparation of the fiscal note and shall return same within 6 days"; and

WHEREAS, in several other states, the legislative fiscal analyst and staff are responsible for providing fiscal notes on all proposed legislation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to study the benefits and drawbacks of transferring responsibility for producing fiscal notes from the executive branch to the legislative branch.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Legislative Services Division may provide administrative,

research, and legal support. The Legislative Fiscal Division may provide additional research and fiscal analysis.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF STATE AGENCY PROCUREMENT PRACTICES; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the Montana Procurement Act has several beneficial purposes, including ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all people who deal with the procurement system in the state of Montana, providing increased economy in state procurement activities, maximizing the purchasing value of public funds, and providing for increased public confidence in the procedures followed by the state in procuring services; and

WHEREAS, all state agencies have a responsibility to adhere to the Montana Procurement Act to ensure the responsible, consistent, and transparent use of public funds; and

WHEREAS, in recent years there have been multiple state agency procurements that have raised questions about transparency and the appropriate use of public funds; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature has a vested interest in ensuring that all laws, including the Montana Procurement Act, are adhered to.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) review state statutes and administrative rules related to state agency procurement;
- (2) identify the policies and procedures state agencies use when determining whether to follow standard procurement procedures or how they otherwise determine whether to seek bids or proposals for services;



- (3) identify any practical obstacles that may impact state agency procurement procedures;
- (4) examine a sampling of procurement contracts from all state agencies, as determined by the designated committee, from the past 4 years, in an amount to not be unduly burdensome to agency staff, and determine which, if any, have deviated from the Montana Procurement Act;
- (5) develop an accounting of the amount of money state agencies have paid to vendors who were selected outside of the standard procurement process;
- (6) evaluate the contracts that have deviated from standard processes for signs of waste, fraud, or abuse;
- (7) investigate ways to standardize and centralize reporting of all state agency procurement contracts; and
- (8) develop recommendations for changes to statute, administrative rule, and agency procedure to prevent future deviations from the Montana Procurement Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF ENDOCRINE-DISRUPTING CHEMICALS, PERFLUOROALKYL AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES, AND WATER QUALITY; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, human reproduction is declining around the world, affecting men, women, and children; and

WHEREAS, the decline in reproduction is attributed to unhealthy lifestyles and chemicals in the environment; and

WHEREAS, endocrine-disrupting chemicals, such as phthalates, bisphenol A, flame-retardants, and pesticides, interfere with the body's hormonal systems; and

WHEREAS, these endocrine-disrupting chemicals are found in toys, plastic drinking bottles, cleaning supplies, house dust, home furniture, electronics, building materials, fragrances, food, food packaging, personal care products, and drinking water; and

WHEREAS, exposure to endocrine-disrupting chemicals may contribute to attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, asthma, obesity, and early puberty in children; thyroid disorders, breast cancer, diabetes, obesity, and infertility in women; and thyroid disorders, diabetes, obesity, infertility, prostate cancer, and low sperm count in men; and

WHEREAS, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, are a large, complex group of synthetic chemicals that have been used in consumer products and may affect human health; and

WHEREAS, PFAS are mobile, persistent, and bioaccumulative and are not known to degrade in the environment; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Quality has preliminarily studied PFAS and noted the

health risks associated with PFAS; and

WHEREAS, statewide solutions should be explored in Montana to reduce or eliminate the potential risks posed by PFAS to human health and the environment; and

WHEREAS, declining birth rates and increasing life expectancy may create a "demographic time bomb" as future generations struggle to meet the needs and obligations of an older population, thereby reducing economic growth, decreasing tax revenue, and increasing health care costs; and

WHEREAS, declining sperm counts, diminished ovarian reserves, and increasing miscarriage rates could eventually threaten survival of the human race; and

WHEREAS, as a modest first step to combat what could become a global calamity, the Montana Legislature should examine the threats of these chemicals in our drinking water.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) review how existing state water quality laws and federal acts, including the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act, protect water quality in Montana and regulate endocrine-disrupting chemicals;
- (2) study the presence of PFAS in Montana, including potential sources of PFAS, sampling and testing methods to identify the presence of PFAS, and routes of human and ecological exposure;
- (3) analyze research related to the health effects of endocrine-disrupting chemicals;
- (4) determine, if possible, the prevalence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in Montana; and
- (5) offer recommendations for future study, rulemaking, or changes to law related to water quality, PFAS, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON THE COLLATERAL CONSEQUENCES OF CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS AND ON CRIMINAL RECORD EXPUNGEMENT; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE IN THE FORM OF INTRODUCED LEGISLATION.

WHEREAS, criminal record clearance mechanisms have quickly become the preferred means to help mitigate many of the barriers and the stigmas that people with a criminal record often face; and

WHEREAS, historically, record clearance was relatively limited and involved restricting public access to a person's official criminal record, which could only be accessed through physical copies from a court; and

WHEREAS, technological innovations have fundamentally changed how information is accessed and shared, so criminal history information is now easily and cheaply available online from a wide variety of sources; and

WHEREAS, as a result, it can be difficult for a person's criminal history to be truly expunged in the digital public forum where employers, landlords, and others commonly seek information about an applicant's criminal history, and many individuals who have a history in the justice system continue to face employment and housing barriers due to background check errors that have been produced by private online sources; and

WHEREAS, state statutory and regulatory codes are littered with provisions that create barriers to employment, licensure, housing, and other opportunities due to a person's criminal history, and the extent to which these provisions implicate expunged criminal history is often uncertain; and

WHEREAS, people with criminal histories contend not only with legal barriers but also discrimination based on the stigmas of private employers and other actors.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) review existing criminal record expungement laws in the state;
- (2) investigate challenges related to collateral consequences of criminal convictions and how discrimination based on stigmas impacts individuals with expunged criminal records in the state. The study may include but is not limited to:
  - (a) the potential legal barriers to opportunity in housing and employment due to unaddressed ambiguity in law regarding expunged criminal history records;
  - (b) discrimination in housing and employment based on inquiries into expunged criminal history;
  - (c) interstate challenges experienced by people with expunged criminal history and any relief afforded by record clearance policies across state lines; and
  - (d) disclosure and dissemination of expunged criminal record information by commercial criminal record providers.
- (3) consider evaluating how landlords, housing providers, and employers in the state interpret expunged records and explore state incentive models, including Medicaid value-based payment models, for expungement-friendly housing;
- (4) analyze felony recidivism rates, employment outcomes, and social determinants of reentry success for individuals with expunged criminal records in the state;
- (5) consider analyzing employment retention, wage growth, and housing stability of individuals with expunged criminal records in the state before and after record expungement;
- (6) examine criminal record clearance laws in other states and identify whether these measures are or would be similarly effective in this state;
- (7) evaluate forensic peer support as a key expungement support service and examine models of peer support integration in reentry programs in other states, specifically in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas; and
- (8) suggest specific changes to existing state law to respond to the legal barriers and discrimination, if any, that individuals with expunged criminal records face.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the assigned committee collaborate with the general public and the relevant state and national stakeholders to examine this topic, including but not limited to the Department of Justice, the Office of the State Public Defender, the Department of Corrections, county prosecutors, and victim advocates.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature in the form of introduced legislation.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENTITY COOPERATION AND CONSOLIDATION; AND REQUESTING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, local government entities, including county, municipal, and consolidated governments, but also a variety of special districts, including but not limited to fire districts, water and sewer districts, road improvement districts, housing authority districts, hospital districts, weed management districts, airport authority districts, irrigation districts, and other miscellaneous districts, are the government units that most closely and directly serve the citizens of Montana; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the various districts, each county, municipality, and consolidated local government is often organized into departments, each with a duty to serve the citizens of Montana and deliver effective service; and

WHEREAS, a majority of local government entities and departments cooperate well and have taken effective steps to meet the needs of their constituents; however, multiple cases exist that demonstrate a lack of cooperation, unnecessary conflict, or otherwise inefficient and ineffective government; and

WHEREAS, the changing demographics of Montana also pose a unique challenge for some areas to continue to provide effective service, especially government entities such as fire departments, fire districts, and fire service areas and other emergency and disaster response entities who have experienced population growth or other changes to the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, reviewing the statutory framework for local government entities and determining if additional tools are needed for those who are experiencing challenges will benefit all citizens of Montana who deserve a functional, effective, and fiscally responsible government.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) identify areas of local government that may benefit from more intergovernmental cooperation or strategies to improve communication, cooperation, and mutual benefit;
- (2) review current methods of intergovernmental cooperation available to local government entities and analyze the effectiveness and efficiency of current methods;
- (3) examine methods or policies used in other states that have been demonstrated to aid in intergovernmental cooperation and determine if the methods or policies may be appropriate for Montana;
- (4) identify and analyze areas of local government that may benefit from consolidation, including consideration of methods for withdrawal or dissolution if local government entities choose to consolidate; and
- (5) analyze the fiscal impacts of increased cooperation or consolidation to both local government entities and the state, including a review of current costs of operation and whether increased cooperation or consolidation measures may reduce those costs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee engage appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to local government officials and employees, the Montana Association of Counties, the Montana League of Cities and Towns, and the Montana State University Local Government Center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee make reasonable attempts to receive input from individual members of local government entities being investigated and take comment from all parties involved in the event the committee discovers a lack of communication, cooperation, or general government effectiveness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON MOVING THE DATE OF MONTANA'S PRIMARY ELECTION; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana's primary election is held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in June preceding a general election held in an even-numbered year; and

WHEREAS, in the 2024 presidential primary cycle, 42 states and territories held their presidential primary election or caucus before Montana's primary election date; and

WHEREAS, the nominees for presidential candidates for both major parties have been decided prior to Montana's primary election in each contest since 2008; and

WHEREAS, states that hold their presidential primary early in the cycle get more attention from candidates and national media, and the concerns of their citizens are prioritized; and

WHEREAS, as of 2024, there were 799,849 registered voters in the state of Montana; and

WHEREAS, moving the date of Montana's primary election to earlier in the cycle could increase attention on the issues of concern to the voters of Montana; and

WHEREAS, moving the date of Montana's primary election would impact existing dates, deadlines, and election procedures, as well as school and local elections and the people who administer them; and

WHEREAS, the House State Administration Committee is committed to keeping all Montana elections honest, fair, and secure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) study moving the date of Montana's primary election;
- (2) examine existing dates, deadlines, and other procedures in Montana law that would need to be adjusted in order to change the date of the primary election;
- (3) assess any potential conflicts with the current timeline for the decennial districting and apportionment processes;
- (4) evaluate the impact of the changes on election administrators and voters;
- (5) examine the impact on other elections of changing the primary election date and identify possible areas for consolidation and efficiency;
- (6) identify the possible benefits, drawbacks, and tradeoffs for the voters of Montana of moving the date of the primary election; and
- (7) develop legislation to introduce during the 70th legislative session that includes a new primary election date and all the changes needed to the Montana Code Annotated to implement the date change.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study be conducted and the recommendations be developed in consultation with all interested stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- (1) county election administrators;
- (2) the Office of the Secretary of State;
- (3) local and tribal government leaders;
- (4) school administrators and officials;
- (5) the Office of Public Instruction;
- (6) stakeholder groups; and
- (7) interested citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE UNIFORM COMMON INTEREST OWNERSHIP ACT; AND REQUESTING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature commonly hears and considers legislation each session regarding owners' associations; and

WHEREAS, the joint Local Government Interim Committee has studied owners' associations for the past two legislative cycles, including learning about the makeup of owners' associations, studying our current legal structure that applies to owners' associations, talking to stakeholders that work with owners' associations about how to address owners' associations in Montana law, and discussing the implementation of the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act to address concerns about owners' associations; and

WHEREAS, during the interim committee's work, it was discussed that the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act also addresses the Unit Ownership Act in Title 70, chapter 23, MCA, which governs condominiums in Montana and has not been thoroughly amended since its adoption in 1965; and

WHEREAS, the laws in banking, insurance, title, real estate, and development industries have significantly changed since 1965; and

WHEREAS, it was identified in the last Local Government Interim Committee that the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act was specifically drafted by the Uniform Law Commission to address the issues the committee identified regarding owners' associations; and

WHEREAS, the committee asked members of the Montana Bar Association to review and draft, with input from stakeholders, the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act, which the Local Government Interim Committee would consider for possible introduction to the 69th Legislature; and

WHEREAS, the draft of the Uniform Common Ownership Act was completed after the final meeting of the Local Government Interim Committee and therefore could not be considered and introduced as a committee bill; and

WHEREAS, the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act was introduced in the 69th Legislature as House Bill No. 619 and was co-sponsored by all sitting legislators that sat on the Local Government Interim Committee; and

WHEREAS, the House Judiciary Committee tabled House Bill No. 619 after committee members argued that the bill was too large and complex to understand after one hearing and needed more review; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of Montanans to have comprehensive and updated laws governing owners' associations and condominiums.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) review and analyze the Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act, as introduced in the 69th Legislature as House Bill No. 619, for potential implementation in Montana;
- (2) review and analyze the current structure of Montana law, including laws governing nonprofit organizations in Title 35, chapter 2, MCA, the Unit Ownership Act in Title 70, chapter 23, MCA, and other laws that specifically address owners' associations; and
- (3) determine if legislative changes are warranted to address owners' associations in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include representatives from interested parties, including but not limited to the Montana Bankers Association, Montana Land Title Association, Montana Association of Realtors, and other industry representatives as considered appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A STATE CATTLE ASSESSMENT AND A MONTANA CATTLE COMMITTEE TO FUND AND ADMINISTER RESEARCH, PROMOTION, AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE THE MONTANA CATTLE INDUSTRY; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the beef industry is a vital and longstanding cornerstone of the state of Montana's agricultural economy, with over 2.5 million cattle raised across the state annually, contributing significantly to the state's gross domestic product, rural communities, and job market; and

WHEREAS, the production of cattle and beef provides a viable living for many Montanans and serves as the economic foundation of many communities; and

WHEREAS, the stabilization, maintenance, and expansion of markets for Montana cattle is necessary in order to provide consumers with an adequate supply of high-quality beef; and

WHEREAS, the state of Montana has established a reputation for producing some of the best beef in the world, and Montana's high-quality beef is a respected product in national and international markets; and

WHEREAS, supporting Montana's beef industry is critical to maintaining the state's reputation for producing some of the best beef in the world; and

WHEREAS, the Montana cattle industry faces numerous challenges, including fluctuating market prices, rising feed and input costs, trade barriers, and increased competition from foreign beef imports; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature recognizes the importance of ensuring that the state's beef industry remains competitive, sustainable, and supported through favorable policies, shared organization, education and promotion, market access, and fair trade agreements.



NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine the profitability and marketability of the state's cattle industry, propose legislation to improve management, research, education, and promotion of state beef and beef products, and support the expansion of domestic and international markets for Montana cattle.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee:

- (1) consider the implementation of a state assessment on Montana cattle to fund the promotion, marketing, research of, and education about Montana cattle and cattle products, similar to the National Beef Checkoff Program but at the state level;
- (2) review how similar state-level cattle assessments were implemented in other states, including but not limited to North Dakota, Idaho, Washington, Utah, California, and Texas;
- (3) examine stakeholder research and recommendations for conducting a referendum of Montana cattle producers to determine the level of interest for a state cattle assessment;
- (4) investigate options for an assessment collection and refund distribution process, similar to existing processes for the refund of assessments on wheat, barley, and pulse crops in Title 80, chapter 11, MCA;
- (5) explore existing resources that could be utilized, including but not limited to the Montana Beef Council; and
- (6) evaluate the membership of a potential quasi-state agency commodity board to administer and manage the state cattle assessment and funds, including the membership selection and the appointment process.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee include input from relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to state cattle producers, the Montana Stockgrowers Association, the Montana Cattlemen's Association, the Montana Association of Livestock Auction Markets, the Montana Cattlewomen, the Montana Beef Council, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, the Montana Meat Processors Association, the Montana Cattle Feeders Association, the Montana Farm Bureau Federation, the Montana Farmers Union, and

other organizations that have an interest in the production or marketing of Montana cattle and cattle products.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON IMPROVING SCHOOL SAFETY; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the safety of children and the adults who educate and care for them is of paramount importance;

WHEREAS, there is a strong correlation between a safe school environment and higher academic achievement, with students in safer schools tending to have better grades and test scores; and

WHEREAS, safe schools promote positive social interactions, reduce bullying, and create a more supportive environment for students to develop healthy relationships; and

WHEREAS, students who feel secure at school are more likely to be engaged in their learning and actively participate in school activities; and

WHEREAS, Montana K-12 schools would benefit from a coordinated cross-system collaborative study to identify existing and nonexistent school safety practices; and

WHEREAS, having proper safety protocols in place allows for effective collaborative response to emergencies such as fires, medical emergencies, and active shooter scenarios; and

WHEREAS, Montana is one of the few states without a unified, coordinated approach to supporting school safety and lacks a designated state system that provides schools with comprehensive guidance and support.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory

committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to conduct a study on improving school safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee collaborate in this study with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to the following organizations and entities:

- (1) the Montana Safe Schools Center;
- (2) the Office of Public Instruction;
- (3) the Montana Department of Justice;
- (4) the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association;
- (5) the Board of Public Education;
- (6) the School Administrators of Montana
- (7) the Montana School Boards Association;
- (8) the Department of Public Health and Human Services;
- (9) the Montana Professional Learning Collaborative;
- (10) the Montana Board of Crime Control; and
- (11) the Jeremy Bullock Memorial Trust.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee organize the study based on an examination of Montana's implementation of the Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety recommended to the Attorney General of the United States by the School Safety Working Group of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services in 2020, including:

- (1) a review of best practices in implementing each action, including examples from other states;
- (2) an analysis of whether, how, and to what degree Montana has implemented best practices for each action; and
- (3) an examination of how Montana can improve the implementation of each action.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

- (1) review existing Montana statutes and funding mechanisms related to school safety, with a specific focus on examining how existing statutes and funding mechanisms can be clarified, coordinated, consolidated, and better aligned with the Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety; and
- (2) examine how cross-agency coordination and collaboration for school safety can be promoted in Montana, including through a designated entity to act as a clearinghouse for model policies, training, and

technical assistance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE LICENSING STANDARDS, EDUCATION, AND PRACTICES OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT IN THE STATE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, residential and commercial landowners hire property managers to manage landowners' properties throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, to manage these properties, property managers are required to obtain a license that requires education and training approved by the Department of Labor and Industry; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the Department of Labor and Industry was charged with the responsibility of receiving complaints from citizens in the state and with disciplining licensed property managers for violations of professional conduct; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Labor and Industry is authorized to create rules and regulations for professional practice with respect to the licensing of property managers, but professional practice is limited in requiring property managers to comply with the responsibilities of the Montana Residential Landlord and Tenant Act and commercial rental contract law in the state; and

WHEREAS, the state recognizes the importance of property managers to provide services to both landowners and tenants with respect to the rental of property; and

WHEREAS, these services are received at a cost, and the costs, which are not monitored or regulated, have affected both landowners and tenants as an increase in rental prices in the state; and

WHEREAS, the state has recognized that foreign corporations and foreign investment groups are not required to have licensed and regulated property managers overseeing rental properties, thus reducing the quality of those rental properties.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) review the current licensing, education, and fee requirements of property managers in Montana;
- (2) review the conformance of property manager requirements and practice with the Montana Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, the commercial rental laws of Montana, and the property management requirements of foreign corporations and investment groups;
- (3) examine the current end-user costs charged to landowners and tenants as a result of property management licensing and education requirements; and
- (4) identify education requirements and practices from other states to evaluate how Montana's statutes align with or differ from those in other jurisdictions and identify best practices that may inform potential legislative changes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee solicit feedback from stakeholders and relevant parties, including but not limited to property managers, landlords, tenants, tenant unions, attorneys who work in landlord-tenant law, professional organizations in the field of landlord-tenant relations, and housing policy experts in the property management industry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICES AVAILABLE AND FUNDED IN MONTANA; AND REQUESTING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the state of Montana is the fourth largest state in the United States in terms of overall landmass with over 94 million acres; and

WHEREAS, Montana's unique landscape provides countless opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, Montana law enforcement agencies entered 2,263 missing persons into the Montana Missing Persons Clearinghouse; and

WHEREAS, Montana is one of the only states in the United States without a statewide search and rescue program or coordinator; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 7-32-2121, MCA, each county sheriff has statutory authority to conduct search and rescue operations; and

WHEREAS, tribal authorities are responsible for search and rescue within their respective jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the resources needed for search and rescue operations often exceed those readily available to local jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, much of Montana is made up of extremely remote areas that necessitate the use of specialized equipment not readily available to local jurisdictions, often requiring the use of privately owned equipment, such as boats or aircraft; and

WHEREAS, search and rescue personnel often need to be trained to operate in extreme or dangerous terrain in remote areas or in dangerous conditions, such as partially collapsed structures or areas with



hazardous materials, both of which require specialized skills that may not be available in a local jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, despite being only 6.5% of Montana's overall population, indigenous persons made up 30.6% of all persons reported missing in the state in 2023; and

WHEREAS, the seven Indian reservations in Montana make up almost 10% of the overall landmass of the state; and

WHEREAS, 19 of the 56 counties in Montana border or contain Indian reservations, presenting unique challenges to search and rescue operations when extraordinary situations necessitate interjurisdictional assistance or reimbursement; and

WHEREAS, operational challenges for search and rescue missions posed by Montana's unique environment and varying landscape are likely to result in costs exceeding the amount that may be reimbursed by the state as provided in section 10-3-801, MCA; and

WHEREAS, operational reimbursement and grant funding for search and rescue teams are administered by multiple state agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks' 2020 fiscal year report on department funding sources indicated yearly revenue distributed to the search and rescue fund totaling \$132,261 and a balance of \$1,393,316; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 15-1-122, MCA, the search and rescue account provided for in section 10-3-801, MCA, is to be funded by 0.04% of the motor vehicle revenue deposited in the state general fund each fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to sections 87-1-601 and 87-2-202, MCA, the search and rescue account provided for in section 10-3-801, MCA, is to be funded by voluntary donations made when purchasing a conservation license; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 10-3-801, MCA, local search and rescue operations conducted through a county sheriff's office are subject to a maximum reimbursement of \$12,000 for each rescue operation, regardless of the number of counties or search and rescue operations that are involved; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 10-3-801, MCA, search and rescue operation reimbursement is administered by the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the Montana Department of Military Affairs but can be obtained by request from the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association search and rescue

subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to section 10-3-801, MCA, only local search and rescue operations conducted through a county sheriff's office are eligible for reimbursement, leaving tribal search and rescue teams and operations disparately impacted.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) review and consider proposing legislation to:
  - (a) update reimbursement amounts based on inflationary and other analyses for local search and rescue operations if the current amount provided in section 10-3-801, MCA, is not commensurate with actual agency costs incurred, no matter how many agencies or jurisdictions are involved;
  - (b) clarify and streamline the process by which agencies make requests for reimbursement for search and rescue operations;
  - (c) address the disparate rate of missing persons in Indian country and determine whether state reimbursement is currently aiding search and rescue operations within those jurisdictions;
  - (d) enhance recognition of the difference between disaster-level events requiring intervention by the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the Department of Military Affairs and more typical events that may be handled entirely at the local level through reimbursement, as provided in section 10-3-801, MCA, or with minimal interjurisdictional assistance;
  - (e) update the search and rescue fund provided for in section 10-3-801, MCA, and update allocations from the fund pursuant to section 15-1-122, MCA, from the Motor Vehicle Division of the Department of Justice's fiscal year revenue deposited in the general fund and voluntary donations from conservation licenses pursuant to section 87-1-601, MCA, administered by the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, respectively, as appropriate; and
  - (f) centralize the administration of search and rescue funding; and
- (2) review:

- (a) all sources of funding for search and rescue available to jurisdictions and teams in the state;
- and
- (b) any provisions of the Administrative Rules of Montana that may inhibit or otherwise affect funds allocated for the provision of funds to jurisdictions requesting reimbursement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee include input from county sheriffs, municipal police, tribal police, county fire departments, tribal fire departments, volunteer fire departments, emergency medical services, volunteer search and rescue personnel, the director or designee of the Disaster and Emergency Services Division of the Department of Military Affairs, the director or designee of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, the director or designee of the Department of Justice, and the director or designee of the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee recognize the unique challenges search and rescue operations may face in Indian country and include input from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Task Force and tribal governments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON THE PROPERTY INSURANCE MARKET IN MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the increasing costs of insurance are further exacerbating major housing affordability challenges in Montana for homeowners, landlords, and tenants; and

WHEREAS, high property insurance premiums hurt Montana businesses; and

WHEREAS, property insurance rates have been increasing significantly for all Montanans, regardless of where they live; and

WHEREAS, Montana had the fifth-fastest increase in rates in the nation in 2024, and Montana's cumulative increases in insurance rates from 2019 to 2024 were 44.3%; and

WHEREAS, from 2012 to 2022, the percentage increase in Montana's insurance premiums, as tracked by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, has outpaced a national increase in rates, increasing twice as fast as the national average in 5 of those 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the coverage provided by insurers is simultaneously shrinking for homeowners and businesses despite the rapidly rising rates of property insurance; and

WHEREAS, Montana home values are rising unrelentingly, with the Montana Department of Revenue reporting that the median residential property value increased by 32% in 2023 alone and with the Montana Department of Labor reporting increases in home values of 5% to 25% each year compared to the preceding decade from 2012 to 2022; and

WHEREAS, the rising cost of insurance may lead to difficulties in obtaining mortgages as financial institutions become increasingly hesitant to approve loans in regions facing high insurance risks; and

WHEREAS, Montana has the second-highest risk in the nation for catastrophic wildfire impacts on property, and some insurers are withdrawing from high-risk areas, leaving homeowners to take on more risk or face higher premiums; and

WHEREAS, 7% of U.S. homeowners lack insurance, with higher rates in Montana than in many other states; and

WHEREAS, Montana's Indian and other minority populations, face disproportionately high risks from wildfires and may struggle to afford rising insurance premiums or recover from losses; and

WHEREAS, Montana experienced 2,388 wildfires in 2024, which burned 387,966 acres, and of the 11.7 million recorded acres burned in the past 138 years, 70% have burned since 2000 and roughly half of the acres burned prior to 2000 were in a single year, 1910, which demonstrates the increasing frequency and financial burden of wildfires in the state; and

WHEREAS, the number of homes in high wildfire risk areas in Montana has doubled since 1990, with development continuing at a rate of 450 homes a year, increasing the risk and cost of fire suppression; and

WHEREAS, the National Association of Insurance Commissioners reports that insurers have experienced losses in 4 of the past 5 years, with insurers in Montana reporting losses in 3 of the past 5 years, leading to higher premiums and reduced coverage; and

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. International Trade Commission, reinsurance costs had increased by as much as 50% at the January 2024 renewals, and it is challenging for some carriers to even find reinsurance.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) evaluate the causes of Montana's increasing property insurance;
- (2) determine the impact of these causes on rates; and
- (3) analyze policy strategies that could stabilize the property insurance market and develop property insurance approaches for more accessible and affordable property insurance in the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review

requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WILDFIRE PREVENTION AND RESILIENCE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, extreme hot, dry, and windy conditions are increasingly prevalent in Montana and throughout the Western United States; and

WHEREAS, the conditions in Montana can make fires more frequent, damaging, and expensive to control or suppress, even in areas of prior fuels treatment, which affects the safety of residents and firefighters, the economy, and the health of Montana's lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, Montana has the second-highest share of properties at risk in the Western United States, which contributes to insurance unaffordability and inaccessibility and exacerbates an existing housing affordability crisis in the state; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have confirmed alarming statistics about Montana's unique and growing vulnerability to wildfire in the 21st century, such as that more than 70% of all recorded wildfires in Montana history have occurred since 2000, more than 90% of Montana's population is in counties with high wildfire risk, and over the past 20 years wildfires have destroyed more than 1,400 homes, businesses, and other structures in Montana; and

WHEREAS, Montana's existing policies and authorities to build for wildfire resilience are not broadly accessible and are not providing community-scale risk reduction; and

WHEREAS, Montana faces rapidly rising housing costs that could be exacerbated by catastrophic disasters, further damaging local economies and communities if additional strategies to reduce risk are not taken; and

WHEREAS, in the spirit of spurring comprehensive reform, the Legislature recognizes that additional

proven policies and strategies to avoid community destruction from fire exist and merit deeper review for the benefit of all Montanans; and

WHEREAS, community-scale risk reduction in the form of defensible space around homes, widespread use of wildfire-resistant building materials, and thoughtful planning provide a necessary defense against exacerbating the hazards and risks of wildfires that enter the urban landscape; and

WHEREAS, thoughtful risk reduction is affordable, cost-effective and necessary in order to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to Montana communities, help protect firefighters, and offer the potential to improve housing affordability by reducing insurance premiums; and

WHEREAS, far-sighted community planning has been shown to provide mutual benefits not only to the state's infrastructure but also to the unique outdoor values that Montanans cherish and rely on to support our local economies, our hunting and fishing traditions, and our time-honored way of life.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine:

- (1) the scope of wildfire impacts on communities, including:
  - (a) the prevalence of wildfires' worsening impacts on population centers in the 21st century;
  - (b) the economic, social, and ecological costs of fires in the wildland-urban interface, including how rising costs impact community resilience; and
  - (c) the costs and benefits of postfire rehabilitation and recovery versus prefire home hardening and community resilience through planning;
- (2) the role of wildfire-focused land use planning in supporting effective wildfire response, including:
  - (a) the role of building materials and nonvegetated buffers, also known as defensible space, in fire spread, speed, and intensity, both on an individual property and on a community-wide scale; and
  - (b) the benefits of maintaining open routes of ingress and egress, water availability, maintained open space buffers, and other innovative land management concepts to improve public safety and reduce the



impacts of wildfire on property and communities;

- (3) the current legal and policy framework regarding wildfire resilience in Montana, specifically:
  - (a) the barriers to widespread adoption of the state's existing laws and regulations; and
  - (b) the factors that reduce the efficacy of the existing framework;
- (4) solutions that can alleviate risk in Montana, including examples of:
  - (a) how to incentivize action at the community level, including tax incentives, cost-share programs, grant programs, and other pathways to ease property owners' burden; and
  - (b) effective statewide regulation of building materials, development patterns, landscaping guidelines, and vegetation management in the wildland-urban interface, including:
    - (i) how the state can allow local jurisdictions to adopt more robust codes and standards than the state baseline that will allow high-hazard communities to protect homes, businesses, and their economies while not placing an onerous burden on lower-hazard communities;
    - (ii) the role of state agencies in effectively acting as liaisons and experts to municipal government in enacting and enforcing statewide wildfire resilience codes;
    - (iii) the development of hazard and risk maps that can inform property owners and local governments where areas of higher or lower hazard exist; and
    - (iv) solutions that effectively balance oversight and enforcement with on-the-ground conditions and flexibility for property owners.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY EXAMINING WATER REUSE; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana's water resources are of exceptional quality and are a valuable resource to the residents of the state; and

WHEREAS, water reuse, also known as water recycling, is a process in which wastewater is purified for a designated beneficial freshwater purpose; and

WHEREAS, the potential uses of recycled water include agricultural, industrial, and municipal purposes; and

WHEREAS, water reuse is a tool to promote sustainable and resilient water supplies and protect environmentally sensitive resources; and

WHEREAS, there may exist technical, regulatory, financial, and educational roadblocks preventing the implementation of water reuse programs in Montana; and

WHEREAS, individualizing levels of treatment for specific uses is more cost and energy efficient than a standardized treatment approach; and

WHEREAS, opportunities for water reuse may be underexplored in Montana.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA to:

- (1) examine existing statutes and administrative rules related to water reuse;

- (2) analyze existing reuse infrastructure, including the volume, timing, use, and availability of reused water;
- (3) examine how other states have implemented water reuse in the public and private sectors;
- (4) analyze what industries, except agriculture, and geographic areas in the state currently implement water reuse programs and what industries and geographic areas in the state may benefit from water reuse programs;
- (5) determine what legal, economic, and social barriers exist for industries and communities attempting to implement water reuse programs;
- (6) analyze what economic, environmental, and population factors necessitate the implementation of water reuse programs; and
- (7) if necessary, propose legislation to incentivize and facilitate water reuse programs in the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF SPECIAL DISTRICTS; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the Governor's Property Tax Task Force recommended a study of special districts; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Revenue data shows collections from special districts account for about 10% of total statewide mill-based property tax collections; and

WHEREAS, some special districts are funded with fees that are not based on a mill levy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee to:

- (1) categorize the different types of special districts;
- (2) understand how special district funding varies and whether special districts are subject to 15-10-420;
- (3) improve available data about special districts, such as their purpose, geographic area, governing entity, funding mechanism, revenue, and spending;
- (4) consider whether there should be limits on special districts; and
- (5) review whether current reporting requirements for special districts are sufficient.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF FARMER'S MARKETS AND LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, farmer's markets contribute to local economic growth by supporting small-scale agriculture and entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS, farmer's markets provide opportunities to strengthen and secure resilient food systems through direct producer-to-consumer sales; and

WHEREAS, farmer's markets promote access to fresh, nutritious foods improving public health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, farmer's markets play a critical role in bolstering local food systems as a matter of national security by reducing dependency on external supply chains, enhancing self-sufficiency, and ensuring food availability during crisis or disruptions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine farmer's markets and food systems in the state of Montana for the purpose of promoting regional food system infrastructure and coordination.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee:

- (1) collaborate on this issue with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to:
  - (a) small-scale agricultural producers;

- (b) farmer's market organization representatives;
  - (c) city or county public health experts;
  - (d) economic development specialists;
  - (e) food systems experts;
  - (f) tribal government representatives;
  - (g) representatives with expertise in food systems and national security;
  - (h) the Department of Public Health and Human Services;
  - (i) the Department of Agriculture; and
  - (j) the Montana State University-Bozeman extension service.
- (2) study the current economic impact of farmer's markets in Montana;
- (3) review barriers to growth and opportunities for farmer's market improvement, including analyzing infrastructure, market access, regulatory frameworks, and statutory definitions;
- (4) study the impact, opportunities, and challenges of the Montana Local Food Choice Act, as provided in Title 50, chapter 49, part 2, MCA, and the state cottage food laws provided in Title 50, chapter 50, MCA;
- (5) study the role of farmer's markets in advancing food security and nutrition, especially in underserved areas;
- (6) review contributions of farmer's markets to local and regional food system resilience, focusing on national security concerns related to food supply disruptions;
- (7) review current statutes governing consumer protection and liability for food producers and markets;
- (8) study potential collaborations between local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private entities to support farmer's markets; and
- (9) study strategies to integrate farmer's markets into broader rural and community development initiatives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th legislature.

- END -





A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION CAPACITY ON PATHS 8, 18, 80, AND 83 TO ANALYZE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MONTANA'S CITIZENS AND INDUSTRY DUE TO THE OBSERVED CONGESTION AND CURTAILMENTS OF TRANSMISSION PATHWAYS; AND REQUIRING THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana has the best resources for renewable energy in the West, and the demand for Montana's renewable energy generation is increasing; and

WHEREAS, lack of access to lower-cost power in Montana has already resulted in the loss of large industrial employers in the state and inhibits the ability to attract new businesses to Montana; and

WHEREAS, large industrial users of electricity wish for more options in requests for proposals to address electricity needs; and

WHEREAS, Montana's neighboring states have more robust transmission infrastructure and available capacity than Montana, and the state's energy infrastructure may become inadequate to serve demand; and

WHEREAS, a secure, reliable, and resilient power grid that integrates generation resources serves as a foundation for an affordable and reliable power supply, a growing economy, and national security; and

WHEREAS, regulators, policymakers, citizens, and industry expect generating resources and the grid to perform reliably.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) investigate issues relating to the available transmission capacity on transmission paths 8, 18,

80, and 83;

(2) analyze the economic impact to Montana's citizens and industry due to the observed congestion and curtailments on Montana transmission paths;

(3) identify and measure the resources in interconnection queues of Montana's transmission service providers;

(4) sample the depth of market and power supply pricing for Montana's large loads; and

(5) suggest specific transmission capacity upgrades, and associated cost-benefit analysis, required to maintain a reliable, affordable electric supply for Montana's citizens and industry.

BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF STATEWIDE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PLANNING, COORDINATION, AND FUNDING TO ENSURE THE EQUITABILITY OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES THROUGHOUT MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, emergency medical services are essential to a well-functioning health system, providing services such as life-saving treatment, patient transport, and community health outreach; and

WHEREAS, reliable emergency medical services response throughout Montana is vital to the well-being of residents, workers, and visitors; and

WHEREAS, Montana currently lacks a comprehensive and equitable statewide emergency medical services planning, coordination, and funding system under Title 50, chapter 6, MCA, to ensure the reasonable availability of emergency medical services throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, rural emergency medical services are strained, with demand increasing due to population growth, changing demographics, and tourism; and

WHEREAS, local emergency medical services agencies, particularly those in rural areas, face rising costs that exceed their resources and capabilities, jeopardizing their ability to meet increased demand for emergency medical services and ensure readiness for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, funding is often inconsistent or rigid, which fails to ensure that the quality and quantity of emergency medical services needed in various parts of the state align with the present and anticipated future demands for services; and

WHEREAS, lack of adequate funding or other critical resources has caused and is causing numerous problems, including but not limited to service calls with delayed response time, inadequate resources to provide

care, and, in extreme cases, the complete shutdown of a fire department and their related emergency medical services.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) consider the implications of recognizing emergency medical services as a statewide essential service;
- (2) assess current emergency medical services capabilities relative to present and anticipated future demands for services over the next 5 years;
- (3) identify areas of the state with a recognized lack of emergency medical services and examine the reasons for the lack of services;
- (4) review and assess current funding mechanisms available to emergency medical services providers;
- (5) coordinate with each county and the department of public health and human services to determine the additional resources needed to ensure the timely and appropriate provision of emergency medical services in each county for the upcoming 5 years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON WAYS TO IMPROVE PASSENGER TRANSPORTATION SERVICE AND PUBLIC TRANSIT IN MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, passenger rail, passenger air, public transit, and passenger bus services provide mobility for senior citizens, persons with disabilities, students, tourists, and businesspeople; and

WHEREAS, some communities in the state are poorly served by public transportation, and options for passenger transportation services in the state continue to decline; and

WHEREAS, the Hi-Line is Montana's major northern transportation corridor, consisting of U.S. Highway 2 and the BNSF Railway, and yet the local residents face challenges with the available methods of transportation. Air travel is another key method of transportation for Hi-Line residents to get to hospital appointments in Billings over 200 miles south in a timely manner, and the residents would benefit from increased air travel locations and options; and

WHEREAS, if state services are unavailable, many Montanans need local, tribal, or county transportation services for help getting to appointments for medical or other physical needs; and

WHEREAS, the Amtrak North Coast Hiawatha ceased operation through southern Montana in 1979, and transportation to and from the major population centers of southern Montana would be greatly enhanced by passenger rail service; and

WHEREAS, additional passenger transportation services will increase passenger transportation-related employment opportunities because of the need for upgraded infrastructure and operating personnel; and

WHEREAS, tourism is the State of Montana's second-largest industry and would be enhanced by improved passenger transportation services and public transit; and

WHEREAS, the Amtrak Empire Builder is one of the most popular long-distance passenger trains in the United States, and it is greatly needed for the citizens of Montana's Hi-Line who have limited public transportation options, but it is challenged by a lack of rail capacity that results in frequent delays; and

WHEREAS, there is currently no board or commission within the state that is charged with the sole responsibility of overseeing and advocating for passenger transportation services, including passenger rail, passenger air, public transit, and passenger bus services; and

WHEREAS, autonomous vehicles may provide one option for transportation needs in the state in the future, and more studies are needed to determine whether laws need to be updated to accommodate autonomous vehicles and to determine whether policies are necessary to address safety, licensing, and other issues of public concern.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to investigate ways to improve passenger transportation and public transit services in the state, including but not limited to the establishment of a passenger transportation commission and a review of applicable laws that may need updating to allow the use of autonomous vehicles and provide for public safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON INTERSTATE POWER GRID DEVELOPMENT; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the modernization and expansion of electric transmission infrastructure is essential to ensuring a secure, reliable, and cost-effective energy supply for Montana and its neighboring states; and

WHEREAS, restrictive and anticompetitive policies in certain jurisdictions hinder the development of necessary transmission projects, resulting in increased costs to ratepayers and inefficiencies in energy markets; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of an interstate compact could facilitate a cooperative framework among states to enhance market-driven solutions, reduce regulatory barriers, and encourage open bidding processes for new transmission projects; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive study is necessary to evaluate the potential benefits, legal considerations, and implementation strategies of an interstate compact to ensure equitable access to transmission infrastructure and cost-sharing mechanisms that fairly allocate expenses among all beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, an interstate compact should adhere to key principles, including technology neutrality, uniform siting and certification processes, streamlined permitting, and the promotion of grid-enhancing technologies to maximize efficiency and minimize costs; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's order RM99-2-000 encourages state adoption of regional transmission organizations and interstate compacts to enhance market efficiency, improve reliability, facilitate just and holistic energy transmission pricing, and streamline electric transmission pricing; and

WHEREAS, President Donald J. Trump declared a national energy emergency on January 20, 2025, and through his public statements and executive orders encouraged a national energy policy focused on increasing energy production, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing regulatory barriers to support economic growth, emerging technologies, and national security, including the establishment of a National Energy Dominance Council to further increase United States energy production, aiming to enhance the interconnectivity and robustness of the energy infrastructure.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) evaluate the legal and regulatory framework for Montana to participate in new cooperative interstate agreements for electric transmission;
- (2) examine the potential economic benefits and cost implications of a compact for Montana ratepayers and industries;
- (3) assess how an interstate compact can incorporate market-based principles to maximize competition and minimize costs for consumers;
- (4) explore best practices from other states and regional transmission organizations that have implemented similar cooperative agreements;
- (5) consider mechanisms to streamline the permitting process and eliminate duplicative regulatory requirements for transmission projects;
- (6) analyze the implications of federal regulatory requirements and how an interstate compact or similar arrangements may facilitate compliance while preserving state sovereignty; and
- (7) engage and consider input from relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the energy industry, consumer advocacy groups, regulatory agencies, and legal experts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review



requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF ETHICS; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Article XIII, section 4, of the Montana Constitution states: "The legislature shall provide a code of ethics prohibiting conflict between public duty and private interest for members of the legislature and all state and local officers and employees"; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature enacted a code of ethics in 1977, which is codified in Title 2, chapter 2, part 1, MCA; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Rules of the Legislature, the Senate Rules, and the House Rules also provide ethics rules applicable to the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, under section 2-2-136(1)(a), MCA, the Commissioner of Political Practices has a role in the enforcement of the code of ethics but does not have jurisdiction for a complaint concerning a legislator if a legislative act is involved in the complaint; and

WHEREAS, the Senate Ethics Committee and the body of the Senate have considered ethical issues during this 69th legislative session and that experience may guide a study.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council study ethics issues. The study must include:

- (1) developing a process grounded in legislative procedure for adjudicating ethics issues;
- (2) determining where there are overlaps or gaps between the authority of the Legislature and the Commissioner of Political Practices; and

(3) considering revisions to the code of ethics and legislative rules that the Legislative Council considers necessary and expedient.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations, be reported to the rules committees of the 70th Legislature and to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON COORDINATING EFFORTS BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AND THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION TO ADDRESS THE IMPACTS OF PRENATAL EXPOSURE TO METHAMPHETAMINE AND FENTANYL ON CHILDREN; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, an increasing number of babies born in Montana have been exposed to methamphetamine and fentanyl in utero; and

WHEREAS, the long-term impacts of prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl include an increased risk of developmental delays, cognitive impairments, and learning disabilities; and

WHEREAS, this increased risk can be further exacerbated in areas of concentrated poverty that are affected by generational trauma;

WHEREAS, the State-Tribal Relations Committee is the statutory committee charged with encouraging state-tribal cooperation and local government-tribal cooperation and with conducting interim studies as assigned;

WHEREAS, a coordinated effort between the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Office of Public Instruction to address these long-term impacts holds the most promise in addressing the health and learning needs of children who had prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory

committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to examine how the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Office of Public Instruction can best coordinate their efforts to address the health and learning needs of children who had prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee:

- (1) collaborate in this study with:
  - (a) the Department of Public Health and Human Services;
  - (b) the Office of Public Instruction;
  - (c) tribal governments;
  - (d) county and tribal health departments; and
  - (e) early childhood care providers and education providers.
- (2) gather, compile, and review statistics on the number of children who had prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl;
- (3) investigate ways other states have addressed the health and learning needs of children who had prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl; and
- (4) develop proposals in collaboration with the Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Office of Public Instruction for a coordinated response to effectively address the health and learning needs of children who had prenatal exposure to methamphetamine and fentanyl.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON THE ENTITIES WITHIN THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN, PHARMACY SUSTAINABILITY, AND THE IMPACTS ON AFFORDABILITY AND PATIENT ACCESS; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) examine and review the structure of the prescription drug supply chain in the state, including:
  - (a) pharmacies, pharmacy services administrative organizations, pharmacy benefit managers, manufacturers, providers, wholesalers, patients, and health plans;
  - (b) the roles, relationships, and decisionmaking authority of these stakeholders within the supply chain; and
  - (c) how those dynamics affect pharmacy operations, prescription drug affordability, and patient access, using aggregated, publicly available, or voluntarily provided data;
- (2) identify factors contributing to pharmacy openings, closures, and patient accessibility, including economic pressures, staffing availability, business arrangements, and geographic considerations;
- (3) explore targeted strategies to reduce patient costs and promote the sustainability of pharmacy operations, with particular attention to rural and underserved areas;
- (4) assess the methods, best practices, technologies, and policy approaches employed by state-administered health plans in other states to address prescription drug affordability and access challenges and

evaluate their relevance and applicability to Montana;

(5) ensure that the study does not request, compel, or rely on proprietary or confidential business information. All data considered must be aggregated, publicly available, or voluntarily provided with no expectation of confidentiality. Study methods must prioritize transparency, data integrity, and stakeholder trust while supporting meaningful policy evaluation.

(6) engage relevant stakeholders across the prescription drug supply chain, including but not limited to patients, providers, pharmacies, pharmacy services administrative organizations, pharmacy benefit managers, manufacturers, health plan sponsors, and health plans to ensure comprehensive and balanced input. Stakeholder feedback must be supported by citations, references, or source documentation sufficient to inform additional analysis and legislative consideration.

(7) develop and recommend statutory, regulatory, or rule changes as appropriate. Each recommendation must clearly identify how the proposal would:

- (a) improve or protect patient access to essential medications;
- (b) address cost impacts on patients, payers, and the state; and
- (c) support the long-term sustainability of independent pharmacy operations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF VOTER LIST MAINTENANCE AND INTEGRITY; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, voter lists are to contain only registered voters qualified to vote in elections; and

WHEREAS, election administrators in each county maintain their own voter lists; and

WHEREAS, some voters die, or become unqualified to vote in another way, and others change addresses, names, or other registration information without notifying the election administrator; and

WHEREAS, many absentee ballots are either not returned or are returned as undeliverable; and

WHEREAS, maintaining an up-to-date voter list containing only qualified voters is vital to election integrity; and

WHEREAS, maintaining an up-to-date voter list requires constant maintenance and innovation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the 69th Legislature recognizes the importance of election integrity and requests that the Legislative Council designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

- (1) study voter list maintenance in Montana, including the practices associated with maintaining these lists at the local level by county election administrators and at the state level by the Office of the Secretary of State;
- (2) research practices used in other states and identify best practices;
- (3) identify and correct inconsistencies and inadequacies in Montana election voter list



maintenance programs that compromise election integrity;

(4) evaluate how state and local databases, such as those maintained by the Motor Vehicle Division, utility companies, courts, the Department of Corrections, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services, may be used to help maintain the accuracy of voter lists;

(5) evaluate how national databases, such as those maintained by the United States Postal Service, could be better utilized to help maintain the accuracy of voter lists;

(6) research what other federal data is available regarding citizenship and voting history that may be useful for maintaining the accuracy of voter lists;

(7) identify places in which state law needs to be reconciled with federal law; and

(8) develop legislation to address these issues and be introduced in the 70th legislative session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders, including but not limited to election administrators, the Office of the Secretary of State, and concerned citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE STANDARDIZATION OF PROSECUTION IN MATTERS OF DEPENDENT NEGLECT; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the handling of dependent neglect and child abuse cases in Montana varies across judicial districts, leading to inconsistencies in prosecution, defense representation, and case outcomes for children and families; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Standards of Practice for Attorneys Representing Parents and Children in Dependent Neglect Cases, established by the Montana Office of the State Public Defender, provide comprehensive guidelines to ensure high-quality legal representation, but no equivalent statewide standards exist for the prosecution of these cases; and

WHEREAS, a standardized framework for both the prosecution and defense of dependent neglect and child abuse cases would promote uniformity, fairness, equity, and due process protections for all parties involved, aligning with Montana's constitutional provisions and national best practices; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of Justice's Child Protection Unit currently prosecutes a limited number of child abuse and dependent neglect cases in certain judicial districts and in certain situations but could potentially expand to provide statewide prosecution services, ensuring consistency, specialized expertise, and equitable resource distribution in all counties and judicial districts; and

WHEREAS, expanding the Child Protection Unit's jurisdiction to handle all child abuse and dependent neglect cases would require an evaluation of the financial, logistical, and structural feasibility of an expansion, including the necessary legislative, budgetary, and operational changes; and

WHEREAS, creating a structure in which two state agencies, the Department of Justice's Child

Protection Unit and the Department of Public Health and Human Services' Child and Family Services Division, work in a coordinated fashion could result in more consistent, applicable, and enforceable policies, enhancing legal outcomes and child protection outcomes; and

WHEREAS, Montana's existing public defender system and specific unit for dependent neglect cases emphasizes early and active engagement, best advocacy for the needs of the child, and adherence to client-directed representation, and any prosecution standardization efforts should incorporate corresponding principles to ensure balanced and just proceedings; and

WHEREAS, a legislative study is necessary to assess the need for standardized prosecution practices, the potential expansion of the Child Protection Unit, and the impact of these changes on the efficiency, fairness, and effectiveness of Montana's child welfare system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to evaluate the standardization of prosecution in dependent neglect cases and the feasibility of expanding the Child Protection Unit's jurisdiction to handle all dependent neglect and child abuse cases statewide, with the goal of improving outcomes for children, ensuring due process for all parties, and enhancing the overall effectiveness, consistency, and equity of Montana's child welfare system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM SURVEY OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE STATE OF MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE SURVEY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, inpatient and outpatient mental health care is difficult to access in Montana; and

WHEREAS, the number of available providers in the state is too small to timely meet the needs of Montanans with mental health care needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to complete a survey of the number and geographic distribution of:

- (1) emergency detention beds for mental health crisis situations;
- (2) beds available across the state for short-term crisis stabilization of mental health conditions;
- (3) beds available for long-term, voluntary psychiatric treatment for adolescents and adults;
- (4) providers available to stabilize individuals experiencing a mental health crisis;
- (5) providers of ongoing services for mental health and maintenance; and
- (6) psychiatrists and clinical psychologists licensed to practice in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the assigned committee draft legislation to:

- (1) increase the number of beds available for emergency detention, involuntary civil commitments, short-term crisis stabilization, and long-term, voluntary psychiatric treatment for adolescents and adults; and

(2) reduce barriers that prevent behavioral health care providers from serving Montanans, especially in rural areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the survey, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the survey, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL; REVIEWING THE POWERS OF THE DISTRICT WEED BOARD AND THE DISTRICT WEED COORDINATOR IN ENFORCING NOXIOUS WEED COMPLIANCE; EXAMINING WAYS TO IMPROVE CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY OF EXISTING STATUTE; RESEARCHING AND PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK FOR OTHER METHODS OF NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL TO BE ADDED TO STATE LAW; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE IN THE FORM OF INTRODUCED LEGISLATION.

WHEREAS, noxious weeds are defined in section 7-22-2101, MCA, as "any exotic plant species established or that may be introduced in the state that may render land unfit for agriculture, forestry, livestock, wildlife, or other beneficial uses or that may harm native plant communities"; and

WHEREAS, existing statutes regarding the control of noxious weeds are spread across no fewer than eight different titles in the Montana Code Annotated; and

WHEREAS, existing powers and responsibilities of the District Weed Board and the District Weed Coordinator in enforcing noxious weed compliance are unclear.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to:

(1) examine current state law and department rules related to the containment, suppression, and, where possible, eradication of noxious weeds in Montana, including but not limited to:

- (a) weed and pest control in Title 7, chapter 22, MCA;
- (b) weed control responsibility in Title 70, chapter 30, part 3, MCA;
- (c) wild and scenic resources in Title 76, chapter 12, MCA, and rangeland resources in Title 76, chapter 14, MCA;
- (d) administration of state lands in Title 77, chapter 1, parts 1 and 8, MCA;
- (e) disease, pest, and weed control in Title 80, chapter 7, MCA;
- (f) reclamation in Title 82, chapter 4, MCA;
- (g) water use lease management in Title 85, chapter 1, part 8, MCA;
- (h) Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks weed control on public lands in Title 87, chapters 1 and 5, MCA; and
- (i) noxious weed management in Title 4, chapter 4.5, ARM;
- (2) research currently available noxious weed control strategies, including herbicides, materials, and equipment;
- (3) examine how other states have incorporated noxious weed control in statute, including the organization of statutes and the definitions involved, as well as enforcement, responsibilities, and penalties;
- (4) propose legislation to:
  - (a) update terminology and definitions to be consistent with current industry standard practice; and
  - (b) modernize and reorganize archaic statute language for conformity with the Montana Bill Drafting Manual; and
- (5) collaborate on this issue with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to:
  - (a) current and former Montana district weed coordinators for weed management districts organized under section 7-22-2102, MCA;
  - (b) the Montana Weed Control Association;
  - (c) the Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council provided for in section 80-7-805, MCA;
  - (d) district weed boards created under section 7-22-2103, MCA;
  - (e) commercial applicators as defined in section 80-8-102, MCA;
  - (f) the Montana State University-Bozeman extension service;
  - (g) the Invasive Species Council established in section 2-15-3309, MCA;

- (h) the Fish and Wildlife Commission established in section 2-15-3402, MCA;
- (i) the State Parks and Recreation Board established in section 2-15-3406, MCA;
- (j) the Department of Agriculture provided for in section 2-15-3001, MCA;
- (k) the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation provided for in section 2-15-3301, MCA;
- (l) the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks provided for in section 2-15-3401, MCA; and
- (m) representatives of each federally recognized tribal government in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature in the form of introduced legislation.

- END -





A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPACTS OF MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the legalization of recreational and medical marijuana in Montana has led to evolving patterns in public health, youth behavior, criminal justice, and behavioral health; and

WHEREAS, Montana lacks a centralized data system to track and monitor the effects of marijuana legalization, limiting the ability of policymakers and communities to respond effectively; and

WHEREAS, high-potency marijuana products remain legally available and have been linked to increased risks of psychosis, depression, anxiety, and cannabis use disorder, particularly among youth and individuals with mental health vulnerabilities; and

WHEREAS, schools, emergency departments, behavioral health providers, treatment centers, community coalitions, and law enforcement have called for better data to inform prevention, treatment, and public safety strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature has a responsibility to ensure that marijuana policy protects youth, promotes public safety, and supports access to treatment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to conduct a narrowly focused interim study on the public health and safety impacts of marijuana legalization in Montana. The study must examine, at a minimum:

- (1) emergency room and urgent care trends related to marijuana and high-potency tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) product use, including psychosis, accidental ingestion, and other health effects;
- (2) youth marijuana use and its impact on academic achievement and the school environment, including academic performance, absenteeism, behavioral issues, and disciplinary actions;
- (3) impacts of marijuana use on the criminal justice system, including arrests, citations, driving under the influence, collisions that involve impaired driving due to marijuana use, and court filings involving marijuana;
- (4) demand for substance use disorder treatment services and the capacity of the behavioral health system to respond;
- (5) the prevalence and treatment of marijuana-associated mental health disorders, including cannabis-induced psychosis, depression, suicidality, and anxiety; and
- (6) gaps in current data collection.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study:

- (1) engage stakeholders, including schools and school-based health staff, student resource officers, behavioral health and substance use professionals, law enforcement, emergency departments and primary care professionals, public health officials, law enforcement and justice system stakeholders, tribal nations and tribal health representatives, and local government leaders and community coalitions, to ensure a collaborative and inclusive study process; and
- (2) use objective, data-driven, and nonpartisan analysis, free from industry or political influence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that on completion of the study, the committee compile the findings into a comprehensive report to inform future policy. The report must include, at a minimum:

- (1) a summary of data and stakeholder input;
- (2) gaps in policy and data collection identified by the study;
- (3) recommendations and proposed strategies to improve statewide marijuana policy and the collection, tracking, coordination, and reporting of data related to marijuana and its use in the state; and
- (4) proposed legislative or regulatory strategies to improve prevention, treatment access, youth protection, and public safety.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including data collection, analysis, and

stakeholder input, be completed prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF YOUTH AND FAMILY PREVENTION PROGRAMS FOCUSED ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN MONTANA; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and other federal agencies historically have awarded competitive prevention grants to Montana behavioral health programs, but national prevention funding is in decline, and the long-term sustainability and coordination to those programs remain unclear; and

WHEREAS, the rapid pace and evolving nature of changes in Montana's publicly funded behavioral health prevention efforts in recent years warrant a close examination of the state's behavioral health care system by its policymakers; and

WHEREAS, the availability and coordination of prevention programs serving youth and families have changed over time without a clear statewide strategy or unified oversight body; and

WHEREAS, youth and families at risk of substance use and behavioral health challenges encounter multiple, often uncoordinated systems, including schools, child welfare, emergency rooms, law enforcement, and juvenile justice, before receiving appropriate interventions or treatment; and

WHEREAS, all stakeholders have a strong interest in preventing substance use, mental health conditions, and family crises before they occur through early intervention and coordinated community support; and

WHEREAS, prevention refers to proactive, research-proven programs that reduce the likelihood of Montanans' experiencing symptoms or negative effects related to behavioral health conditions; and

WHEREAS, schools, tribal communities, public health departments, and nonprofits provide youth

prevention programming to address both mental health and substance use; and

WHEREAS, the use of technology and virtual platforms to deliver prevention programs has expanded in recent years; and

WHEREAS, as a citizen legislature, the Montana Legislature and its members are particularly attuned to the unique needs of our state and its dynamic composition of urban, rural, and tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature routinely invests in prevention efforts for youth, including school-based mental health programs, suicide prevention initiatives, mental health screening tools, public awareness campaigns, and evidence-based programs, such as the PAX Good Behavior Game and Youth Awareness of Mental Health, and by expanding access to youth support services and fostering partnerships among agencies, schools, and communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, to undertake a comprehensive review of the elements of Montana's behavioral health prevention programs, including systems serving youth and families, to:

- (1) outline current and projected funding of prevention efforts, detailing the federal, state, local, and private funding streams;
- (2) study how the prevention system helps divert youth and families from substance abuse treatment, mental health crises, emergency room visits, school dropouts, and involvement with the criminal justice system;
- (3) assess the adequacy of the state's system of higher education to appropriately train and educate prevention specialists and other necessary behavioral health and community service providers to meet the prevention needs of Montanans;
- (4) identify where gaps exist in the state's behavioral health system; and
- (5) determine whether the Legislature or the Executive Branch is best poised to bridge system gaps.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee or statutory committee:

- (1) collaborate with the Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Office of Public Instruction, the Montana University System, including its state universities and community and tribal colleges, tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, faith-based institutions, and other relevant stakeholders in examining primary prevention efforts for youth in Montana;
- (2) conduct a statewide inventory to gather information about primary prevention programs currently implemented at the state, local, and tribal levels that serve youth under 18 years of age, including school-based, health-based, community-based, faith-based, and mentorship initiatives;
- (3) identify all existing funding streams for primary prevention efforts for youth in Montana, including federal, state, local, and private sources, and evaluate how these funds are utilized, coordinated, or siloed;
- (4) map the current prevention workforce involved in youth-serving systems, including professionals from education, behavioral health, child welfare, mentoring programs, health care, and community coalitions;
- (5) examine the various settings in which prevention efforts are delivered, such as schools, health care systems, community-based organizations, tribal nations, and faith-based groups, to assess integration, reach, and areas for potential alignment;
- (6) provide an overview of evidence-based, culturally responsive, and promising primary prevention practices that have demonstrated effectiveness in addressing substance use, mental health, and adverse childhood experiences for youth;
- (7) utilize available data, including the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Prevention Needs Assessment, data on adverse childhood experiences, and any other available data sets and information, to assess risk and protective factors affecting Montana youth and to identify trends over time;
- (8) determine whether capturing a snapshot view or conducting a longitudinal analysis would serve as the best tool to track outcomes and measure the long-term effectiveness and return on investment of prevention strategies;
- (9) examine how other states and jurisdictions have implemented coordinated prevention infrastructures or strategic frameworks, and determine whether aspects of those models should be adapted for Montana;

(10) evaluate the efficacy and efficiency of Montana's current prevention efforts, including both duplication of and gaps in services, and opportunities for innovation and streamlined implementation; and

(11) provide recommendations for developing a unified, data-driven strategic plan for Montana's prevention infrastructure, including estimated costs, implementation timelines, and proposed mechanisms for oversight, coordination, and accountability.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -