



*Montana State Legislature*  
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**Representative Bill Mercer**  
House District 46

March 31, 2022

Ryan Osmundson  
Budget Director  
Office of Budget and Program Planning  
State of Montana  
P.O. Box 200802  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Ryan:

Given the discussion during the LFC meeting earlier this month on the budget development process, I wanted to bring the attached letter to your attention and to make a request.

During the House Bill 2 hearings before the House Appropriations Committee in 2021, I discussed the letter and asked the various Directors about what their agencies had provided to OBPP in response to the request from Director Livers for information required by § 17-7-111(3)(c), MCA. The statute requires each agency's budget request to contain (1) "a statement of the agency mission and a statement of goals and objectives for each program of the agency" and (2) "sufficient specific information and quantifiable information to enable the legislature to formulate an appropriations policy regarding the agency and its programs and to allow a determination, at some future date, on whether the agency has succeeded in attaining its goals and objectives." § 17-7-111(3)(c), MCA. Given the transition, the new Directors had not been involved in the development of the final Bullock Administration budget. However, few of them reported that their agencies had provided your office with "a statement of goals and objectives for each program of the agency" in 2020. I do not recall hearing testimony that any agency had provided OBPP with "specific information and quantifiable information to enable the legislature to formulate an appropriations policy regarding the agency and its programs and to allow a determination, at some future date, on whether the agency has succeeded in attaining its goals and objectives" in 2020. This was unsurprising. In both the 2019 and 2021 legislative sessions, it seemed like appropriators had little to go on in terms of the goals and objectives for each agency program and metrics to determine at a later date whether the agencies succeeded in

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DURING THE SESSION  
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Appropriations  
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attaining goals and objectives. I am hopeful that you will ensure the agencies comply with these statutory requirements in developing their budget requests.

If I am reading the statutes correctly, your office is responsible for circulating forms to the agencies by August 1st to ensure that you receive the information required by § 17-7-111(3)(c), MCA, by September 1st. *See* § 17-7-112(1)-(2), MCA. You, in turn, forward this information to the Legislative Fiscal Analyst by September 1st. *See* § 17-7-112(3). This timeline should work well for discussion of the submissions pursuant to § 17-7-111(3)(c), MCA, at the September 14th IBCs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill", written in a cursive style.

Bill Mercer

cc: Amy Carlson

Enclosure