

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

Date: April 6, 2015

Re: **Legislative update**

We are nearing the end of the 2015 Legislative Session. House Bill 2, the State Budget Bill, was heard by the Senate Finance and Claims Committee last week and is scheduled to be debated on the Senate Floor on Thursday, April 9. As approved by the subcommittee our budget has increased by approximately 1.1% overall and 3.3% General Fund over the current biennium. These increases include the Water Information System Coordinator position which was made permanent and increases for fixed costs.

The Senate Finance and Claims Committee added an additional \$4,161 in Coal Severance Tax monies to our budget for fiscal year 17. Our appropriation of these funds remains down by approximately \$90,000 each year of the biennium.

Based on 2013 Legislative action, the number of FTE in state government was reduced by 4%, reducing our total number of FTE by 1.29. The Senate Finance and Claims Committee also adopted an amendment adding a personal services contingency fund and approving a 2% vacancy savings. This vacancy savings is not an additional budget reduction but makes ongoing, the unfunded amount of the executive implementation of the pay plan. In total, our personal services budget has been reduced by 6%.

Additional updates on legislation is as follows:

- LC 2289, Generally Revise Library Laws, sponsored by Sen. Dee Brown. This bill draft request was not introduced before transmittal.

Proponents:

- House Bill 14, Creating broadband development fund through bonding, was tabled in committee.

Opponents:

- House Bill 368, Sunset voter approved property tax levies after certain period of time, was heard in the Senate taxation committee last week.
 - After initially being tabled in the House Taxation committee, the bill was taken from the table and amended. Currently, this bill would require an automatic sunset on all new, voter approved levies after ten years, except those entities exempted by the bill. Importantly, libraries were amended out of this bill, protecting future library levies.

Informational witnesses:

- House Bill 123, Generally revise public records laws, has been amended numerous times and was approved by the Senate State Administration Committee. It now moves to the Senate floor for debate.
 - This bill would alter a reference contained in 22-1-211, Montana Code Annotated, "Definitions," but it does not change the substance of our statute.
- House Bill 331, a bill that would require the state to remove the name "half-breed" or "breed" from any place name, passed the Legislature and goes to the Governor for signature.
 - If signed, this bill will create a modest amount of additional work for MSL staff member, Gerry Daumiller, the State Geographic Names Coordinator, to submit newly proposed names to the federal board of Geographic Names.
- House Joint Resolution No. 7, a resolution requesting an interim study of Next-Generation 9-1-1, was heard before the Senate Energy and Telecommunications committee last week. The bill awaits committee action.
 - Next-Generation 9-1-1 systems are Internet Protocol based systems, rather than plain old telephone service systems and are built on geographic information systems (GIS). As such, the systems allow for more accurate call routing based on a callers determined location. The nature of these systems requires well-integrated, standardized GIS data, as is managed by MSL in partnership with local governments.
- Senate Joint Resolution No. 18, a resolution to study light detection and ranging data, has passed the Senate and will be heard in the House.
 - Light detection and ranging data (Lidar) is a tool to determine detailed measurements of a surface, for example, the earth. This proposed study would examine the costs and statewide benefit of investing in statewide Lidar. If passed, the resolution calls for the interim committee to coordinate with the State Library to complete the study.

Other bills of interest include:

- House Bill 10, a funding bill for major state IT expenditures, passed the House and has been referred to the Senate Finance and Claims committee.
- House Bill 13, the state pay plan bill, was tabled in committee. An attempt to blast the pay plan bill to the House floor failed.
- House Bill 155, Develop a digital archives plan, was tabled in committee.
- House Bill 231, Revise Information Technology Laws, was tabled in committee.
- Senate Bill 220, Repeal the electronic government advisory board and transfer duties, passed the Senate, and the House State Administration Committee. It received a unanimous vote of support on 2nd reading on the House Floor and is scheduled for 3rd reading on April 7.
 - The State Library has a seat on both the electronic government advisory board and the Information Technology Board that would take over the responsibilities of the board if eliminated.
- Senate Joint Resolution 17, Interim study regarding coal phase-out, was heard in the Senate Natural resources committee on March 18. No further action has been taken.
- The Governor's Early Edge Initiative is contained within the proposed budget of the Office of Public Instruction (OPI). The Education subcommittee declined to take action on the New Proposal and amendments to add Early Edge in House Appropriations, on the House Floor and in Senate Finance and Claims have all failed.

For more information or to track bills of interest visit:

[http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0217W\\$BAIV.return_all_bills?P_SESS=20151](http://laws.leg.mt.gov/legprd/LAW0217W$BAIV.return_all_bills?P_SESS=20151).