

# Memo

**To:** Montana State Library Commission

**From:** Jennie Stapp, State Librarian

**Date:** May 28, 2015

**Re:** **Final Legislative Update**

The 2015 Legislative session came to a close on April 28th when both the House and the Senate adjourned sine die.

House Bill 2, the State Budget Bill, was approved by the House and Senate after being amended by Free Conference. Our budget 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. Our appropriation for Coal Severance Tax monies was reduced by approximately \$90,000 each year of the biennium. These monies fund library federation grants, statewide library databases and the state publications digitization program. In keeping with this year's strategy to manage the reduction in CST monies, I will recommend to the Network Advisory Council that MSL not renew our contract with Tutor.com for HomeworkMT. We did consult with the Office of Public Instruction to determine if they could fund the contract for the coming fiscal year but they cannot.

Unfortunately, the FTE reduced by the 2013 Legislature, including 1.29 FTE in the State Library, were not restored this session. Through existing vacant positions and the proposed reorganization of the Digital Library MSL will be able to absorb most, but not all, of this reduction.

Additionally, HB 2, as approved, includes funding for a State Employee Pay Plan. The amount of funding for the plan is slightly less than the pay plan proposed in HB 13 which would have funded raises at \$.50/hr beginning in October of each of the next two fiscal years + increases for the state share of benefits. As a result of the lower negotiated

amount, raises will be given in January of each fiscal year. Increases for the state share of benefits remains the same.

Additional legislative updates:

LC 2289, Generally Revise Library Laws, sponsored by Sen. Dee Brown, was not introduced before transmittal.

MSL was a proponent for House Bill 14, Creating broadband development fund through bonding. This bill was tabled by the House Appropriations Committee.

MSL opposed House Bill 368, Sunset voter approved property tax levies after certain period of time. After initially being tabled in the House Taxation committee, the bill was taken from the table and amended. Importantly, libraries were amended out of this bill, protecting future library levies. The bill was ultimately tabled by the Senate Taxation Committee.

MSL acted as Informational Witnesses for the following bills:

- House Bill 123, Generally revise public records laws, passed the Legislature and was signed by the Governor.
  - This bill alters a reference contained in 22-1-211, Montana Code Annotated, "Definitions," but it does not change the substance of our statute.
  - Additionally, the new law requires minutes to be kept for executive sessions of public meetings. These minutes need only be made public in the event of a legal challenge.
- 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 was signed by the Governor.
  - This new law creates 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 passed by the Legislature. It ranked third in the prioritization of interim studies and has been assigned to the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee.
  - 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, died on the House Floor.
  - 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. MSL was specifically named in the bill as the lead entity to assist with the study.

Other bills of interest include:

- House Bill 10, a funding bill for major state IT expenditures, was approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. The Governor used his line-item veto authority to eliminate funding for an enterprise e-content management system to support electronic records management.
- House Bill 13, the state pay plan bill, was tabled in committee (see above).
- 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 Legislature and was signed by the Governor.
  - 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 tabled by the Senate Natural Resources Committee.
- The Governor's Early Edge Initiative was not funded.