

WEEKLY REPORT
Missoula
Week Ending 2-5-2021

WEEK IN REVIEW

HB134: Allow zoning for duplex, triplex and fourplex housing in certain municipal areas.

Position: OPPOSE

Tabled in Committee 2/4.

This bill was heard in House Local Government on 1/26. The sponsor described this as an affordable housing bill and garnered support from the Builders Association, students, and Americans for Prosperity of Montana, locally. A Bozeman planning board member also supported. An AFP activist and academic from Washington D.C. also called in to support the bill. Rossi spoke in opposition for Bozeman. Other opponents included City Planners, and The League of Cities and Towns. Opposition pointed out the array of negative impacts this bill would have on local government ability to plan efficiently for growth. The committee did not appear to be in favor of the bill and the sponsor has resisted efforts to amend "affordable housing" language into the bill. The committee will likely take a vote early next week.

HB106: Prohibit expansion of the Montana Clean Indoor Air Act.

Position: OPPOSE.

Tabled in Committee 2/4.

MacDonald testified against this bill in House Local Government. Proponents continue to argue incorrectly that local governments who have adopted restrictions on vaping under their ordinances have "overreached" their authority. Difficult hearing as several committee members did not want opponents to discuss vaping, when that is the core issue the sponsor is attempting to prevent from being regulated.

HB259: Revise property and zone laws

Position: OPPOSE

Hearing held 2/2. Executive action scheduled for 2/9

MacDonald testified in opposition for Bozeman and Missoula. Joined by the league, planners and others. Supporters included the Montana Building Industry Association, Montanans For Prosperity and the Montana Realtors Association. The bill would prohibit local governments from passing any inclusionary housing ordinances or enforcing inclusionary housing requirements. MacDonald and Rossi have been working committee members and believe we have the number needed to table this in committee.

HB243: Generally revise laws related to law enforcement.

Position: Missoula SUPPORT MONITOR for BOZEMAN

Hearing Held 2/3. Awaiting executive action.

This bill was requested by the City of Missoula Police Chief to address the use of reserve officers in a limited capacity as court security officers. Mike Hopkins from Missoula area is carrying this

for us. Chief White will appear on the bill along with MacDonald. No opposition seen at this point. Of some interest to Bozeman, but at this point we'll be speaking in favor of it only for Bozeman.

HB21: Authorize funding for the multifamily coal trust home loan program.

Position: SUPPORT.

Passed Third Reading 57-42. Hearing in Senate Finance and Claims held 2/2. Awaiting Executive action.

Need to continue to monitor and help out as needed if there are any signs of weakening support.

HB121: Require elected official approval of local health board and officer actions.

Position: OPPOSE unless AMENDED

Passed House Local with amendments and now REFERRED to House Business and Labor
One of the measures intended to put controls on the abilities of local health boards. Considered the least "offensive" of a series of these bills, local government interest worked to get this one amended to a place where it could be the one we could live it.

NEW BILLS OF CONCERN OR INTEREST:

HB269: Require elected official approval of sanitation related local health board rules.

Position: NEEDS REVIEW

Hearing scheduled 2/9

Pointed out by Kelly Lynch as a bill of concern.

LC2515: Revise net metering laws.

Position: NEEDS REVIEW.

Not listed as a priority by either city, but Missoula "notes" recommends support.

HB240: Revise state income tax deductions for certain dependents.

Position: NEEDS REVIEW

HB303 Revise business equipment tax laws: Business Investment Grows (BIG) Jobs Act.

Position: NEEDS Review.

Hearing Scheduled for 2/9. House Tax.

The bill would reduce business equipment taxes, but says in the title that provides for a reimbursement to local governments and TIF 7 financing districts under the entitlement share program. Reviewing with League.

STATUS OF OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

SB77: Revise allowable special district assessment methods.

Position: OPPOSE AS IS. SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS

Hearing Held 1/15. League is taking the lead in the committee. Executive action planned for Friday, 1-29, was postponed until next week. Kelly Lynch has an agreement with the sponsor that will address the concerns communities and the League have. We will assist the league in securing votes for the amended version of the bill.

HB319 (LC2076): Revise dates for special purpose elections.

Position: SUPPORT

Proposed by City of Bozeman. Bill draft has been completed and was introduced on 2/4. Expecting a hearing date as early as the week of 2/8.

STATUS OF PRIORITY ISSUES:

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Our strategy has turned largely defensive as we continue efforts to prevent legislation that would limit affordable housing options. We were successful in defeating Rep. Tenebaum's HB134 and have been working members of House Local Government to table Rep. Vinton's HB259. Executive action on that bill is expected on 2/9 and we will continue to shore up legislators who have told us they will not support the bill. Other legislation good for affordable housing, specifically HB21, continues to move forward. Our local option proposal, LC2411, ties directly to affordable housing as well as is advancing. (See below).

LOCAL OPTION: LC2411 Spoke with Sen. Pope on 2/4 and his bill has been sent to legislative services for legal review and editing. Once that drops – likely the week of 2/8, we will schedule another call to discuss strategy. Hope to get representatives from Missoula, Bozeman, the League and others to discuss. We will want a good cross-section of support for the hearing when it is scheduled, and see who may be able to attend in person and those who will attend remotely.

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF: LC2411 continues to be our major push for property tax relief at this point.