1	SENATE BILL NO. 550
2	INTRODUCED BY R. LAIBLE
3	
4	A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING THE LAWS GOVERNING LOCAL GOVERNMENT
5	STUDY COMMISSIONS; AUTHORIZING THE IMPOSITION OF A MILL LEVY AND PROVIDING FOR AN
6	EXCEPTION FROM THE MILL LEVY LIMITS FOR A LEVY FOR FUNDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDY
7	COMMISSIONS; CLARIFYING THE PROCEDURES FOR PROPOSALS FOR ALTERNATIVE FORMS OR
8	PLANS OF GOVERNMENT MADE BY PETITION OR BY A STUDY COMMISSION; PROVIDING THAT
9	ELECTED OFFICIALS REMAIN IN OFFICE UNLESS THE NEW FORM OR PLAN ELIMINATES THE OFFICE
10	FOR WHICH THEY WERE ELECTED; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 7-3-122, 7-3-141, 7-3-142, 7-3-149,
11	7-3-151, 7-3-152, 7-3-153, 7-3-155, 7-3-156, 7-3-157, <u>7-3-158,</u> 7-3-160, 7-3-161, 7-3-175, 7-3-178, 7-3-184,
12	7-3-187, 7-3-192, 7-3-193, AND 15-10-420, MCA."
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14	BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:
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16	Section 1. Section 7-3-122, MCA, is amended to read:
17	"7-3-122. Definitions. As used in 7-3-121 through 7-3-161, unless the context indicates otherwise, the
18	following definitions apply:
19	(1) "Authority" means:
20	(a) a municipal or regional airport authority as provided in Title 67, chapter 11;
21	(b) a conservancy district as provided in Title 85, chapter 9;
22	(c) a conservation district as provided in Title 76, chapter 15;
23	(d) a drainage district as provided in Title 85, chapter 8;
24	(e) an irrigation district as provided in Title 85, chapter 7;
25	(f) a hospital district as provided in Title 7, chapter 34, part 21;
26	(g) a flood control and water conservation district as provided in Title 76, chapter 5, part 11;
27	(h) a county water and sewer district as provided in Title 7, chapter 13, part 22; or
28	(i) an urban transportation district as provided in Title 7, chapter 14, part 2.
29	(2) "Finance administrator" means the individual responsible for the financial administration of the local
30	government and generally means the county or city treasurer or town clerk unless the alternative form or

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1	governing body specifies a different individual.			
2	(3) "Form of government" or "form" means one of the types of local government enumerated in 7-3-102			
3	and the type of government described in 7-3-111.			
4	(3)(4) "Governing body" means the commission or the town meeting legislative body established in the			
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9	(5)(7) "Records administrator" means the individual responsible for keeping the public records of the			
10				
11	body specifies a different individual.			
12	(6)(8) "Subordinate service district" means a special district within a local government in which certain			
13	services are provided and in which taxes may be levied to finance the services."			
14				
15	Section 2. Section 7-3-141, MCA, is amended to read:			
16	"7-3-141. Permissible recommendations. (1) A petition proposing to alter an existing form of county			
17	government may:			
18	(a) recommend amendments to the existing plan of government;			
19	(b) recommend any plan <u>form</u> of government authorized by Title 7, chapter 3, parts 1 through 6 5;			
20	(c) draft a charter;			
21	(d) recommend municipal-county consolidation or amendments to an existing consolidation; or			
22	(e) in cooperation with a similar petition calling for an election on county merger circulated in an adjoining			
23	county, recommend county merger.			
24	(2) A petition proposing to alter an existing form of a municipal government may:			
25	(a) recommend amendments to the existing plan of government;			
26	(b) recommend any plan form of government authorized by Title 7, chapter 3, parts 1 through 6;			
27	(c) draft a charter; or			
28	(d) recommend disincorporation."			
29				
30	Section 3. Section 7-3-142, MCA, is amended to read:			
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1 "7-3-142. Requirements for petition. A petition proposing an alteration of an existing form of a local 2 government must contain: 3 (1) a certificate containing the "plan of government" of the existing form of local government; 4 (2) a certificate containing the "plan of government" of the proposed new form of local government or 5 amendments to the existing plan; 6 (3) a certificate containing the "plan of apportionment" of commissioner districts if districts are contained 7 in the "plan of government"; and 8 (4) a comparison of the existing form of government and plan of government and proposed form of 9 government and plan of local government, including, if desired, a statement of the strengths and weaknesses of 10 the existing and proposed forms and plans of local government, information that supports the adoption of the 11 proposed form and plan, and information that supports retention of the present form and plan." 12 13 Section 4. Section 7-3-149, MCA, is amended to read: 14 "7-3-149. Election on alternative alteration of form of government. (1) The governing body shall call 15 a special election on the question of an alternative alteration of the form of government or change in a plan of 16 government proposed by petition to be held at the next regular or primary election that is at least 75 days after 17 the call and the date of filing with the records administrator under 7-3-146. The records administrator shall 18 prepare and print notices of the election. 19 (2) The cost of the election must be paid for by the local government. 20 (3) (a) The affirmative vote of a simple majority of those voting on the question is required for adoption. 21 (b) In any election involving the question of consolidation, each question must be submitted to the 22 electors in the county and requires an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the votes cast in the county on the 23 question for adoption. There is no requirement for separate majorities in local governments voting on 24 consolidation. 25 (c) In any election involving the question of county merger, the questions must be submitted to the 26 electors in the counties affected and require a majority of the votes cast on the questions in each affected county 27 for adoption. 28 (d) If the electors disapprove the proposed new form of local government, amendments, or consolidation 29 plan, the local government retains its existing form." 30 Legislative - 3 -

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1 Section 5. Section 7-3-151, MCA, is amended to read: 2 "7-3-151. Treatment of suboptions for proposed alternative forms. (1) A No petition recommendation 3 may not involve more than three separate suboptions, and no a suboption may not contain more than two 4 alternatives. If a suboption is submitted to the voters, only the ballot alternatives within that suboption receiving 5 the highest number of affirmative votes are considered approved and included in the alternative form of government. If the alternative form of government fails, a suboption is of no effect. 6 7 (2) A proposed change of the form of government or change in a plan of government shall must be 8 submitted to the voters as a single question, except that the suboptions within the alternative plan form of local 9 government authorized in Title 7, chapter 3, parts 1 through 6, and the suboptions authorized in a charter may 10 be submitted to the electors as separate questions. The question of adopting a suboption shall must be submitted 11 to the electors in substantially the following form: 12 Vote for one: 13 A legal officer (who may be called the "county attorney"): 14 [] Shall To be elected for a term of 4 years. 15 [] Shall To be appointed for a term of 4 years by the chairman presiding officer of the local 16 governing body." 17 18 Section 6. Section 7-3-152, MCA, is amended to read: 19 "7-3-152. Effect of adoption of new form of government or change in plan of government. The 20 adoption of a new form of government or a change in a plan of government does not affect the validity of any 21 bond, debt, contract, obligation, or cause of action accrued or established under the prior form of government." 22 23 Section 7. Section 7-3-153, MCA, is amended to read: 24 **"7-3-153.** Filing of approved plan. (1) A copy of the existing or proposed new form of government or 25 change in a plan of government that is proposed by petition and that is ratified by the voters and any 26 apportionment plan or consolidation or merger plan must be certified by the presiding officer of the governing 27 body and filed with the department of administration, the county records administrator, and the municipal records 28 administrator if it is a municipal plan. 29 (2) The approved form of government or change in a plan of government filed with the department of 30 administration is the official plan and is a public record open to inspection by the public and judicially noticeable



1	1 by all courts."		
2	2		
3	3 Section 8. Section 7-3-155, MCA, is amended to read:		
4	4 "7-3-155. Three-year moratorium. (1) Unless the constitution requires otherwise,	the electors of any	
5	5 unit of local government which that has voted upon the question of changing the form of	local government,	
6	6 charter, or consolidation plan or upon the question of amending the alternative form, charter, or	-consolidation plan	
7	may not vote on the question of changing or amending the form of local government for 3 years.		
8	8 (2) For the purposes of this section, general election dates are considered to be 1 y	ear apart and may	
9	9 be used in computing the 3-year moratorium. No An election on the question of changing an	alternative form of	
10	10 a unit of local government may <u>not</u> be challenged as failing to conform with the moratorium	n provisions of this	
11	11 section because 3 full calendar years may not have elapsed."		
12	12		
13	13 Section 9. Section 7-3-156, MCA, is amended to read:		
14	14 "7-3-156. Effective date of alternative plan <u>form</u> or amendment <u> officers</u> . (1) 7	An alternative plan	
15	15 <u>A change in form of local government or plan of government approved by the electors takes e</u>	ffect when the new	
16	16 officers take office <u>pursuant to 7-3-161</u> , except as otherwise provided in any charter or cons	olidation transition	
17	17 plan. A consolidation or merger plan adopted by the electors takes effect in the same manne	er.	
18	18 (2) Provisions creating offices and establishing qualifications for office under any a	pportionment plan	
19	19 become effective immediately for the purpose of electing officials.		
20	20 (3) An officer elected under an existing form of government or plan of government	<u>t continues to hold</u>	
21	21 office under a new form of government or change to a plan of government if the new form of	<u>r plan continues to</u>	
22	22 <u>have that office, whether or not the new officer is to be elected or appointed. A successor</u>	may be elected or	
23	23 appointed, as appropriate, to fill the office at the end of the term for which the holdover office	er was elected.	
24	24 (3)(4)(3) An amendment to the plan of an existing plan form of government become	nes effective at the	
25	25 beginning of the local government's fiscal year commencing after the election results are official	Illy declared <u>unless</u>	
26	26 the plan provides for an increase in the number or type of elective officers, in which case the	amendment takes	
27	27 effect when the new officers take office."		
28	28		
29	29 Section 10. Section 7-3-157, MCA, is amended to read:		
30	30 "7-3-157. General transition provisions. (1) The governing body shall prepare a	n advisory plan for	
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orderly transition to a new <u>form of government or plan of local government <u>proposed by petition</u>. The transition
 plan may propose necessary ordinances, plans for consolidation of services and functions, and a plan for
 reorganizing boards, departments, and agencies.
</u>

4 (2) The governing body of a local government may enact and enforce ordinances to bring about an 5 orderly transition to the new <u>form of government or</u> plan of government, including transfer of powers, records, 6 documents, properties, assets, funds, liabilities, or personnel. These ordinances are to be consistent with the 7 approved plan and necessary or convenient to place it into full effect. Whenever a question arises concerning 8 transition which <u>that</u> is not provided for, the governing body may provide for the transition by ordinance, rule, or 9 resolution not inconsistent with law."

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SECTION 11. SECTION 7-3-158, MCA, IS AMENDED TO READ:

12 "7-3-158. Transition provisions affecting personnel. (1) The members of the governing body holding 13 office on the date the new plan of government is adopted by the electors of the local government continue in office 14 and in the performance of their duties until the governing body authorized by the plan has been elected and 15 qualified, whereupon the prior governing body is abolished.

16 (2) An officer, including a member of the governing body, elected under an existing form of government 17 or plan of government continues to hold office under a new form of government or change to a plan of 18 government if the new form or plan continues to have that office, whether the new officer is to be elected or 19 appointed. A successor may be elected or appointed, as appropriate, to fill the office at the end of the term for 20 which the holdover officer was elected.

21 (2)(3) All other employees holding offices or positions, whether elective or appointive, under the 22 government of the county or municipality continue in the performance of the duties of their respective offices and 23 positions until provisions are made for the performance or discontinuance of the duties or the discontinuance of 24 the offices or positions.

25 (3)(4) A charter or a petition proposing an alteration to an existing form of local government change in 26 a form of government or a plan of government may provide that existing elected officers shall of an office that is 27 abolished may continue in office until the end of the term for which they were elected or may provide that the 28 existing elected officers shall be retained as local government employees until the end of the term for which they 29 were elected, and their salaries may not be reduced."

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1	Section	n 12. Section 7-3-160, MCA, is amended to read:
2	"7-3-16	50. Election of new officials. (1) Within 20 days after an election at which the <u>a</u> new plan form
3	of government	or change in a plan of government is approved by the electors, the governing body of the local
4	government sha	all meet and order a special primary and general election for the purpose of electing the officials
5	required by the	new form or plan of government. The elections for officials may must be held in conjunction with
6	any other electi	on <u>of that government</u> .
7	(2) The	e order shall <u>must</u> specify:
8	(a) a da	ate for the primary election to be held no later than the <u>government's</u> next regularly scheduled city
9	or county prima	ary election; and
10	(b) a d	ate for the general election to be held no later than the next regularly scheduled city or county
11	general electior	n following the primary election date established under subsection (2)(a)."
12		
13	Section	n 13. Section 7-3-161, MCA, is amended to read:
14	"7-3-16	51. Organization of new governing body. (1) The first meeting of a new governing body for a
15	new plan <u>differe</u>	ent form of government shall must be held at 10 a.m., 60 days after the election of the new officers.
16	At that time, ne	wly elected members officers shall take the oath of office prior to assuming the duties of office.
17	(2) If th	e terms of the commissioners are to be overlapping, they shall <u>newly elected commissioners shall</u>
18	draw lots to est	ablish their respective terms of office."
19		
20	Section	n 14. Section 7-3-175, MCA, is amended to read:
21	"7-3-17	75. Election on question of establishing study commission. (1) The question of conducting
22	a local governr	ment review and establishing a study commission shall must be submitted to the electors in
23	substantially the	e following form:
24	Vote fo	r one:
25	0	FOR the review of the government of (insert name of local government) and the establishment
26		and funding, , NOT TO EXCEED (INSERT DOLLAR OR MILL AMOUNT), NOT TO EXCEED (INSERT DOLLAR OR
27		MILL AMOUNT), of a local government study commission consisting of (insert number of members)
28		members to examine the government of (insert name of local government) and submit
29		recommendations thereon on the government.
30	[]	AGAINST the review of the government of (insert name of local government) and the

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30	that it is in existence and shall submit it to the local governing body for approval.		
29	"7-3-184. Financial administration. (1) A study commission shall prepare a budget for each fiscal year		
28	Section 16. Section 7-3-184, MCA, is amended to read:		
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26	necessary expenses incurred in their official capacity."		
25	(3)(4) Members of the study commission may not receive no compensation other than for actual and		
24	the commission. The appointment shall must be made within 30 days of the date the vacancy occurs.		
23	commission shall must be filled by appointment by the governing body of the local government being studied by		
22	determined in the same manner as a vacancy in municipal office as provided in 7-4-4111. A vacancy on a study		
21	(2)(3) A vacancy on a study commission, including an ex officio member vacancy, shall <u>must</u> be		
20	the date of the first statewide general election following the election required by 7-3-176.		
19	(2) Except as provided in subsection (1), the term of office of study commission members terminates on		
18	7-3-187.		
17	recommends no alternative plan, the term ends 30 days after submission of the final report in accordance wit		
16	is adopted, the term continues for 90 days after the day of the vote on the alternative plan. If the commission		
15	or on the day of their appointment and ends on the day of the vote on the alternative plan. If the alternative plan		
14	members begins on the day that their election to the study commission is declared or certified under 13-15-405		
13	"7-3-178. Term of office vacancies compensation. (1) The term of office of study commission		
12	Section 15. Section 7-3-178, MCA, is amended to read:		
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10	on the question."		
9	and no later than 90 days after the passage of a resolution or the certification of a petition calling for an election		
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7			
6	an affirmative vote of a majority of those voting on the question for passage.		
5	(2) The question of conducting a local government review and establishing a study commission requires		
4	and submit recommendations on the government.		
3	number of members) members to examine the government of (insert name of local government)		
2	(INSERT DOLLAR OR MILL AMOUNT), of a local government study commission consisting of (insert		
1	establishment and funding, , NOT TO EXCEED (INSERT DOLLAR OR MILL AMOUNT), NOT TO EXCEED		

(2) (a) Subject to 15-10-420 For the support of the study commission, for each fiscal year that the study
 commission is in existence, each local government under study may shall appropriate an amount necessary to
 fund the study not to exceed 1 mill, and the local government may levy up to 1 mill MILLS in excess of all other
 mill levies authorized by law to fund the appropriation for the support of the study commission.

5 (b) The local government shall provide office and meeting space and clerical assistance to the study 6 commission. The cost of clerical assistance and other in-kind services provided by the local government may be 7 used to partially fulfill the appropriation provision of subsection (2)(a).

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(c) The local government may provide additional funds and other assistance.

9 (3) The study commission may apply for and accept available private, state, and federal money and may
10 accept donations from any source.

(4) All money received by the study commission must be deposited with the local government finance administrator. The finance administrator is authorized to disburse appropriated money of the study commission on the study commission's order after approval of the budget by the governing body. Unexpended money of the study commission does not revert to the general fund of the local government at the end of the fiscal year but carries over to the study commission's appropriation for the following fiscal year. Upon termination of the study commission, unexpended money reverts to the general fund of the local government."

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18 **Section 17.** Section 7-3-187, MCA, is amended to read:

"7-3-187. Final report. (1) A study commission shall adopt a final report. If the study commission
 recommends an alternative form of alteration of a local government, the final report must contain the following
 materials and documents, each signed by a majority of the study commission members:

(a) those materials and documents required of a petition proposing an alteration of an existing form of
 <u>a local government in 7-3-142;</u>

(b) a certificate establishing the date of the special election, which must be held in conjunction with a
 regular or primary election, at which the alternative form <u>of government or change in a plan</u> of government is
 presented to the electors and a certificate establishing the form of the ballot question or questions; and

(c) a certificate establishing the dates of the first primary and general elections for officers of a new
government if the proposal is approved and establishing the effective date of the proposal if approved.

(2) The final report must contain any minority report signed by members of the commission who do notsupport the majority proposal.

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(3) If the study commission is not recommending any changes, its final report must indicate that changes
 are not recommended.

3 (4) The study commission shall file two copies of the final report with the department of administration,
4 one of which the department shall forward to the state library. A copy of the final report must be certified by the
5 study commission to the municipal or county records administrator within 30 days after the adoption of the final
6 report.

(5) Sufficient copies of the final report must be prepared for public distribution. The final report must be
available to the electors not later than 30 days prior to the election on the issue of adopting the alternative form
or plan of government. Copies of the final report may be distributed to electors or residents of the local
government or governments affected.

(6) After submission of the final report, the commission shall deposit copies of its minutes and other
 records with the county clerk and recorder."

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Section 18. Section 7-3-192, MCA, is amended to read:

15 "7-3-192. Election on recommendation. (1) An alternative form or plan of government recommended
16 by a study commission must be submitted to the voters as provided in 7-3-149. The election must be held in
17 conjunction with any regularly scheduled election of that government.

(2) General ballot requirements and treatment of suboptions on an alternative <u>form or plan of government</u>
 recommended by a study commission must be the same as for recommendations by petition as provided in
 7-3-150 and 7-3-151."

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Section 19. Section 7-3-193, MCA, is amended to read:

"7-3-193. Application of other sections. (1) Except as provided in subsection (2) <u>of this section</u>, <u>the</u>
 <u>provisions of</u> 7-3-122 and 7-3-152 through 7-3-161 apply to the adoption of an alternative <u>form or</u> plan of
 government upon recommendation by a study commission.

(2) (a) The chairman presiding officer of the study commission and not the chairman presiding officer

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27 of the governing body shall certify documents under 7-3-153.

(b) The study commission and not the governing body shall prepare an advisory plan for orderly
 transition to a new form or plan of local government under 7-3-157.

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(c) A study commission plan may provide for existing elected officers under 7-3-158(3)(4)."

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Section 20. Section 15-10-420, MCA, is amended to read: "15-10-420. Procedure for calculating levy. (1) (a) Subject to the provisions of this section, a governmental entity that is authorized to impose mills may impose a mill levy sufficient to generate the amount of property taxes actually assessed in the prior year plus one-half of the average rate of inflation for the prior 3 years. The maximum number of mills that a governmental entity may impose is established by calculating the number of mills required to generate the amount of property tax actually assessed in the governmental unit in the prior year based on the current year taxable value, less the current year's value of newly taxable property, plus one-half of the average rate of inflation for the prior 3 years. (b) A governmental entity that does not impose the maximum number of mills authorized under subsection (1)(a) may carry forward the authority to impose the number of mills equal to the difference between the actual number of mills imposed and the maximum number of mills authorized to be imposed. The mill authority carried forward may be imposed in a subsequent tax year. (c) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a), the department shall calculate one-half of the average rate of inflation for the prior 3 years by using the consumer price index, U.S. city average, all urban consumers, using the 1982-84 base of 100, as published by the bureau of labor statistics of the United States department of labor. (2) A governmental entity may apply the levy calculated pursuant to subsection (1)(a) plus any additional levies authorized by the voters, as provided in 15-10-425, to all property in the governmental unit, including newly taxable property. (3) (a) For purposes of this section, newly taxable property includes: (i) annexation of real property and improvements into a taxing unit; (ii) construction, expansion, or remodeling of improvements; (iii) transfer of property into a taxing unit; (iv) subdivision of real property; and (v) transfer of property from tax-exempt to taxable status. (b) Newly taxable property does not include an increase in value that arises because of an increase in the incremental value within a tax increment financing district. (4) (a) For the purposes of subsection (1), the taxable value of newly taxable property includes the release of taxable value from the incremental taxable value of a tax increment financing district because of:

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(i) a change in the boundary of a tax increment financing district;

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1 (ii) an increase in the base value of the tax increment financing district pursuant to 7-15-4287; or 2 (iii) the termination of a tax increment financing district. 3 (b) If a tax increment financing district terminates prior to the certification of taxable values as required 4 in 15-10-202, the increment value is reported as newly taxable property in the year in which the tax increment 5 financing district terminates. If a tax increment financing district terminates after the certification of taxable values 6 as required in 15-10-202, the increment value is reported as newly taxable property in the following tax year. 7 (c) For the purpose of subsection (3)(a)(iv), the subdivision of real property includes the first sale of real 8 property that results in the property being taxable as class four property or as nonqualified agricultural land as 9 described in 15-6-133(1)(c). 10 (5) Subject to subsection (8), subsection (1)(a) does not apply to: 11 (a) school district levies established in Title 20; or 12 (b) the portion of a governmental entity's property tax levy for premium contributions for group benefits 13 excluded under 2-9-212 or 2-18-703. 14 (6) For purposes of subsection (1)(a), taxes imposed do not include net or gross proceeds taxes received 15 under 15-6-131 and 15-6-132. 16 (7) In determining the maximum number of mills in subsection (1)(a), the governmental entity may 17 increase the number of mills to account for a decrease in reimbursements. 18 (8) The department shall calculate, on a statewide basis, the number of mills to be imposed for purposes 19 of 15-10-107, 20-9-331, 20-9-333, 20-9-360, 20-25-423, and 20-25-439. However, the number of mills calculated 20 by the department may not exceed the mill levy limits established in those sections. The mill calculation must be 21 established in whole mills. If the mill levy calculation does not result in a whole number of mills, then the 22 calculation must be rounded up to the nearest whole mill. 23 (9) (a) The provisions of subsection (1) do not prevent or restrict: 24 (i) a judgment levy under 2-9-316, 7-6-4015, or 7-7-2202; 25 (ii) a levy to repay taxes paid under protest as provided in 15-1-402; or 26 (iii) an emergency levy authorized under 10-3-405, 20-9-168, or 20-15-326; or 27 (iv) a levy for the support of a study commission under 7-3-184. 28 (b) A levy authorized under subsection (9)(a) may not be included in the amount of property taxes 29 actually assessed in a subsequent year. 30 (10) A governmental entity may levy mills for the support of airports as authorized in 67-10-402,

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67-11-301, or 67-11-302 even though the governmental entity has not imposed a levy for the airport or the airport
 authority in either of the previous 2 years and the airport or airport authority has not been appropriated operating

3 funds by a county or municipality during that time.

- 4 (11) The department may adopt rules to implement this section. The rules may include a method for
 5 calculating the percentage of change in valuation for purposes of determining the elimination of property, new
 6 improvements, or newly taxable property in a governmental unit."
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- END -

