1   SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

2   INTRODUCED BY B. HAWKS, HOLLANDSWORTH, BROWN, WILMER

3

4   A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF

5   MONTANA URGING THE BOARD OF REGENTS AND THE COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO

6   STUDY THE GROWING DIVIDE BETWEEN RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES AND PRESENT THE

7   FINDINGS AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY TO THE LEGISLATURE'S EDUCATION AND

8   LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE.

9

10   WHEREAS, sustainable economic development in Montana is jeopardized by a growing divide between

11   Montana's rural and urban communities; and

12   WHEREAS, rural communities face increasing economic challenges due to a declining population and

13   limited access to technology, capital, health care, educational resources, and agricultural market services; and

14   WHEREAS, urban communities are dependent on rural areas to meet increasing demands for energy,

15   agricultural products, timber, clean water, ~~and access to~~ hunting, fishing, ~~open space,~~ and recreation; and

16   WHEREAS, urban and rural development associated with inadequate planning continues to shrink the

17   rural areas available for agricultural production, energy production, and natural resource development required

18   to meet increasing demand; and

19   WHEREAS, rural and urban communities are interdependent and should share a common interest in and

20   an aspiration for a sustainable economic future for Montana; and

21   WHEREAS, Montana needs to develop solutions to the rural and urban divide that can be reached only

22   through partnership and collaboration based on an integrated community vision that connects rather than divides

23   Montana's rural and urban communities; and

24   WHEREAS, the Montana University System has the knowledge base, research facilities, and outreach

25   capabilities to provide a leadership role in promoting research, analysis, and dialog on these issues; and

26   WHEREAS, if Montana establishes a successful ongoing approach to examining rural and urban

27   challenges and developing integrated solutions, Montana's approach may serve as a model to assist other states

28   in finding a common vision for improved quality of life for both rural and urban communities and a more

29   sustainable economic future.

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1   NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE

2   STATE OF MONTANA:

3   That the Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Higher Education are urged to oversee and direct

4   a study that:

5   (1) examines the nature of the rural and urban divide in Montana;

6   (2) requires the collection and analysis of data concerning Montana's rural and urban demographics that

7   will focus on ~~sustainable land use policy~~ <u>AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION CAPABILITIES</u>, business and

8   industrial growth, workforce needs, food and water consumption, ~~agricultural and livestock production capabilities,~~

9   energy consumption and production capabilities, natural resource consumption and development capabilities,

10 access to health care and educational resources, ~~access to hunting, fishing, open space, and~~ recreation <u>AND</u>

11 <u>HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES</u>, and other rural and urban issues;

12   (3) brings urban and rural interest groups, stakeholders, and policy analysts together to share information

13 and discuss ways to build partnerships and to develop action plans for moving Montana toward a more inclusive

14 format in rural and urban affairs; and

15   (4) explores the feasibility of conducting a pilot project and establishing and funding a rural-urban institute

16 as part of the Montana University System that can provide ongoing research and analysis of rural and urban

17 interdependence and facilitate ongoing strategic planning in the public and private sectors to overcome the

18 rural-urban divide and move Montana forward as one Montana.

19   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and recommendations of the study be presented to the

20 Legislature's Education and Local Government Interim Committee before July 1, 2012.

21   - END -