

Montana State Librarian Testimony

Short Title: Transfer GIS Responsibilities to State Library

House Bill 38
"Transfer GIS Responsibilities to State Library"
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Montana State Library
444-3116
Before the
House Appropriations
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Chairman Ankney, members of the House Appropriations committee, for the record my name is Jennie Stapp and I am your State Librarian.

- House Bill 38 makes housekeeping changes to transfer authority for the Montana Land Information act, and three related statutes, to the State Library. It passed unanimously out of the State Administration committee on January 15 and received a unanimous vote, on 2nd reading, on the House floor before being referred to this committee.
- The transfer is being proposed following a lengthy review conducted by a task force that was seated by the Governor. This task force was charged with finding efficient alternatives for the maintenance and delivery of geospatial information. The major conclusion of this task force was that the mission of the Base Map Service Center, the program that staffs the work of the Montana Land Information Act, more closely aligns with the strategic goals of the State Library than the State Information Technology Services Division. The merger occurred in September 2011 and is currently being administered through an interagency agreement between the Department of Administration and that State Library.
- The transfer of fiscal authority for the Montana Land Information Account, the funding source for the Montana Land Information Act, is included in House Bill 2. As reflected in your fiscal note for this bill, the Department of Administration's budget shows a reduction of \$943,612. This amount is included as their Decision Package 703. The corresponding increase to the State Library's budget in the amount of \$954,062 is included in House Bill 2 as our Decision Package 201. These decision packages have been reviewed by the appropriate subcommittees during our budget hearings.

- The joint appropriates subcommittee for General Government approved Decision Package 703 contingent on the passage House Bill 38. The joint appropriations subcommittee on education is scheduled to take executive action on our budget this Friday.
- You may wonder why, if this bill transfers funding authority, the amounts reflected in our two budgets are slightly different. The lesser amount in the Department of Administration's budget reflects the salary amounts for the 2.5 FTE, included in the transfer, as if those positions were vacant. These positions are not vacant. The State Library's budget includes the true salary costs for those existing staff.
- Since the initial transfer of the BMSC to the State Library, staff has worked hard to find efficiencies to reduce costs and the financial load on the State and on Montana Land Information Act funds. Because our two staffs now operate as one, we have been able to eliminate duplicate data and GIS services and better coordinate staff activities, bringing Montana closer to achieving the Governor's goal to provide more efficient GIS services to our entire state. As a result, in FY2013 more than \$252,000 was awarded in grants to local governments to further the goals of the Montana Land Information Act. This is the most money awarded to these constituents since the act was first adopted in 2005.
- This good work began under the leadership of the Department of Administration and continues to develop through the transfer of the Base Map Service Center to the State Library. We are very pleased to have the opportunity to continue these efforts so that GIS may continue to develop as a vital information resource in Montana.

I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you