

HOUSE BILL NO. 588

INTRODUCED BY R. COOK

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO A REDUCTION IN SPENDING; AMENDING SECTION 17-7-140, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 17-7-140, MCA, is amended to read:

"17-7-140. Reduction in spending. (1) (a) As the chief budget officer of the state, the governor shall ensure that the expenditure of appropriations does not exceed available revenue. Except as provided in subsection (2), in the event of a projected general fund budget deficit, the governor, taking into account the criteria provided in subsection (1)(b) (1)(c), shall direct agencies to reduce spending in an amount that ensures that the projected ending general fund balance for the biennium will be at least 1% of all general fund appropriations during the biennium;

(i) 3.5% of all general fund appropriations for the biennium prior to October of the year preceding a legislative session;

(ii) 1.875% of all general fund appropriations for the biennium in October of the year preceding a legislative session;

(iii) 1.25% of all general fund appropriations for the biennium in January of the year in which a legislative session is convened; and

(iv) 0.625% of all general fund appropriations for the biennium in March of the year in which a legislative session is convened.

(b) An agency may not be required to reduce general fund spending for any program, as defined in each general appropriations act, by more than 10% during a biennium. Departments or agencies headed by elected officials or the board of regents may not be required to reduce general fund spending by a percentage greater than the percentage of general fund spending reductions required for the total of all other executive branch agencies. The legislature may exempt from a reduction an appropriation item within a program or may direct that the appropriation item may not be reduced by more than 10%.

(b)(c) The governor shall direct agencies to manage their budgets in order to reduce general fund

1 expenditures. Prior to directing agencies to reduce spending as provided in subsection (1)(a), the governor shall
2 direct each agency to analyze the nature of each program that receives a general fund appropriation to determine
3 whether the program is mandatory or permissive and to analyze the impact of the proposed reduction in spending
4 on the purpose of the program. An agency shall submit its analysis to the office of budget and program planning
5 and shall at the same time provide a copy of the analysis to the legislative fiscal analyst. The report must be
6 submitted in an electronic format. The office of budget and program planning shall review each agency's analysis,
7 and the budget director shall submit to the governor a copy of the office of budget and program planning's
8 recommendations for reductions in spending. The budget director shall provide a copy of the recommendations
9 to the legislative fiscal analyst at the time that the recommendations are submitted to the governor and shall
10 provide the legislative fiscal analyst with any proposed changes to the recommendations. The recommendations
11 must be provided in an electronic format. The legislative finance committee shall meet within 20 days of the date
12 that the proposed changes to the recommendations for reductions in spending are provided to the legislative
13 fiscal analyst. The legislative fiscal analyst shall provide a copy of the legislative fiscal analyst's review of the
14 proposed reductions in spending to the budget director at least 5 days before the meeting of the legislative
15 finance committee. The committee may make recommendations concerning the proposed reductions in spending.
16 The governor shall consider each agency's analysis and the recommendations of the office of budget and
17 program planning and the legislative finance committee in determining the agency's reduction in spending.
18 Reductions in spending must be designed to have the least adverse impact on the provision of services
19 determined to be most integral to the discharge of the agency's statutory responsibilities.

20 (2) Reductions in spending for the following may not be directed by the governor:

- 21 (a) payment of interest and principal on state debt;
22 (b) the legislative branch;
23 (c) the judicial branch;
24 (d) the school BASE funding program, including special education;
25 (e) salaries of elected officials during their terms of office; and
26 (f) the Montana school for the deaf and blind.

27 (3) (a) As used in this section, "projected general fund budget deficit" means an amount, certified by the
28 budget director to the governor, by which the projected ending general fund balance for the biennium is less than:

- 29 (i) ~~2%~~ 5% of the general fund appropriations for the second fiscal year of the biennium prior to October
30 of the year preceding a legislative session;

- 1 (ii) ~~3/4 of 1%~~ 1.875% in October of the year preceding a legislative session;
- 2 (iii) ~~1/2 of 1%~~ 1.25% in January of the year in which a legislative session is convened; and
- 3 (iv) ~~1/4 of 1%~~ 0.625% in March of the year in which a legislative session is convened.
- 4 (b) In determining the amount of the projected general fund budget deficit, the budget director shall take
- 5 into account revenue, established levels of appropriation, anticipated supplemental appropriations for school
- 6 equalization aid and the cost of the state's wildland fire suppression activities exceeding the amount statutorily
- 7 appropriated in 10-3-312, and anticipated reversions.
- 8 (4) If the budget director determines that an amount of actual or projected receipts will result in an
- 9 amount less than the amount projected to be received in the revenue estimate established pursuant to 5-5-227,
- 10 the budget director shall notify the revenue and transportation interim committee of the estimated amount. Within
- 11 20 days of notification, the revenue and transportation interim committee shall provide the budget director with
- 12 any recommendations concerning the amount. The budget director shall consider any recommendations of the
- 13 revenue and transportation interim committee prior to certifying a projected general fund budget deficit to the
- 14 governor."

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16 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

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