

HOUSE BILL NO. 616

INTRODUCED BY J. PRICE

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A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT APPROPRIATING FUNDS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM TO PURCHASE AND INSTALL ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUNDS; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

WHEREAS, there are 8,674 children with disabilities between the ages of 1 and 17 living in communities across Montana; and

WHEREAS, many playgrounds across Montana are not accessible to or usable by children with disabilities because they lack adequate surfacing to provide an accessible path of travel to play equipment; and

WHEREAS, many communities throughout Montana lack the funding needed to make the necessary accessibility improvements to ensure that their playgrounds comply with accessibility standards; and

WHEREAS, this program provides a matching grant opportunity for local communities to stretch limited resources and partner with the State of Montana to allow children and adults of all abilities the opportunity to play together.

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

NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Appropriation.** (1) There is appropriated \$425,000 in each year of the biennium beginning July 1, 2015, from the general fund to the department of fish, wildlife, and parks, parks division, to establish a state grant program that allows local communities, school districts, and grassroots organizations to apply for matching funds to purchase and install accessible playground features and equipment.

(2) The money must be used to provide grants that will increase accessibility in existing playgrounds or for the costs of accessibility features in new playgrounds. The state funds must be matched at a rate of 2 to 1, with \$2 in state grant funds to \$1 in nonstate funds.

(3) The money may not be used during initial construction for accessibility features required by the Americans With Disabilities Act for newly constructed playgrounds or to upgrade existing restroom or parking facilities that are not compliant with applicable accessibility standards.

(4) An advisory committee may be established by Montana state parks to review grant applications and



1 recommend projects for funding.

2 (5) Grant criteria may be established by Montana state parks in collaboration with the advisory committee.

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4 NEW SECTION. **Section 2. Effective date.** [This act] is effective July 1, 2015.

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