

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29

2 INTRODUCED BY M. NOLAND

3
4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT AND WORKFORCE
6 HOUSING; AND REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 69TH
7 LEGISLATURE.

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9 WHEREAS, access to safe, affordable, workforce housing for both renters and homeowners is
10 essential to Montana's social and economic welfare; and

11 WHEREAS, homeownership has been an essential element of the American Dream for decades; and

12 WHEREAS, documented social benefits of homeownership include increased charitable activity,
13 greater civic participation, neighborhood attachment, lower incidences of teen pregnancy, higher high school
14 graduation rates, better physical and psychological health, and significant increases in wealth and in reported
15 life satisfaction, self-esteem, and happiness; and

16 WHEREAS, workforce housing is an increasingly difficult problem for many Montana communities. With
17 relatively few workforce homes available for working families and with much of the existing workforce inventory
18 aging and in need of rehabilitation, many working families are being priced out of housing markets; and

19 WHEREAS, in Montana the average house price is \$430,528, and the state has seen the second
20 largest increase in house prices out of all 50 states, with a 79.4% increase in the past 5 years; and

21 WHEREAS, in 2022, the average national rent increase was 11.3%, but the average rent increase was
22 14.7% in Yellowstone County, 18.6% in Gallatin County, 18.9% in Missoula County, and 36.5% in Lewis and
23 Clark County; and

24 WHEREAS, families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing are considered cost-burdened
25 and may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care; and

26 WHEREAS, workforce housing remains an urgent priority issue in the state and poses a problem not
27 only for first-time home buyers and renters, but also for employers looking for qualified employees; and

28 WHEREAS, using a combination of public data, data provided by local sources, research from the

1 literature, information from other states, and data on Montana, the study will assess the landscape of federal
2 and state direct and indirect funding efforts for increasing the quantity and quality of available workforce homes
3 in Montana and comparable states.

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5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
6 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

7 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
8 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- 9 (1) examine the current availability of workforce housing in metropolitan and rural areas of the
10 state;
- 11 (2) identify existing federal, state, and local subsidies, grants, and other incentives and programs
12 available to increase the availability of workforce housing, the extent to which the subsidies, grants, and other
13 incentives and programs are utilized, and the successfulness of their usage in increasing the availability of
14 workforce housing;
- 15 (3) examine the challenges facing those in need of workforce housing, including financial, social,
16 and logistic challenges;
- 17 (4) assess the ability of local governments to leverage existing laws and resources, including
18 partnering with nonprofit and for-profit entities, to increase the availability of workforce housing;
- 19 (5) examine the best practice of other states in increasing the availability of workforce housing;
- 20 (6) examine any unique challenges faced by local governments across the state resulting from
21 differences in economic prosperity and considering the differences between the metropolitan and rural areas of
22 the state;
- 23 (7) evaluate the potential benefits, cost savings, and improved affordability from utilizing energy
24 efficiency standards in housing; and
- 25 (8) assess the feasibility and cost savings from partnerships between public utilities and private
26 businesses in replacing aging housing in existing programs with newer modular and mobile home units.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study include input from appropriate stakeholders, including but
28 not limited to the Department of Commerce, the Montana Board of Housing, the Department of Labor and

1 Industry, local entities, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
3 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
5 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2024.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
7 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 69th Legislature.

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