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Legislative Council

65th Montana Legislature

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September 8, 2017

TO: Interim Committee Presiding and Vice-Presiding Officers and Lead Staff Sen. Vance
FROM: Susan Byorth Fox, Executive Director Susan B. Fox
RE: Potential 17-7-140, MCA Budget Reductions

On behalf of the Legislative Council, I wanted to let you know that the Legislative Services Division will be working on budget reductions to meet the final average percentage reduction that the Governor will seek from the Executive Branch reduction request. The Legislative Audit and Fiscal Divisions are also working on a similar budget reduction.

I am working to prepare a draft Budget Reduction Plan for Programs 20 and 21. Program 21 budget reductions will affect the Interim Committees and Activities. Once the Executive Branch's request is received, I will work with the Legislative Council's Chair and Vice Chair in preparing a Final Budget Reduction Plan for presentation to the full Council for approval. At that time, I will inform you of the budget reductions to your individual interim committees. I will also be able to give you an up-to-date budget information based on the first meetings of the interim to help you plan better.

There is no need to make any changes in your work plan at this time until a final budget reduction plan is adopted, which will be well into October after this next round of meetings.

The Council wanted me to let you know of the various options you will have going forward. The options include, but are not limited to:

1. monitoring your budgets to see how meeting expenses proceed before making any changes to your work plan or schedule;
2. reprioritizing studies or subcommittees to reduce your workload;
3. reducing the number of meeting days, or the number of meetings; or
4. monitoring the budgets and using the balance through 2018 with the understanding that the committees will not be able to meet in May or June of 2019.

A lot of committees are meeting in September or October. Once your meeting claims and expenditures are finalized, we will provide you with an updated budget, and upon adoption, the budget reduction information that you can use to discuss with members and staff on how you'd like to proceed for decisions at a subsequent meeting.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

cc: Sen. Fred Thomas, Rep. Jenny Eck
Rep. Nancy Ballance, Sen. Cynthia Wolken
Sen. Mary McNally, Rep. Tom Burnett

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