

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32  
INTRODUCED BY B. EBINGER

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO EVALUATE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND STRATEGIES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

WHEREAS, the State of Montana has a broad and diverse history that is reflected by its rich cultural legacy and outstanding heritage assets; and

WHEREAS, the State and the people of Montana value their history and heritage assets; and

WHEREAS, historic preservation, state stewardship, and heritage activities are embraced by many Montanans as ideals that reflect the best interests of communities and Montana; and

WHEREAS, preservation of historic and archeological resources, including buffalo jumps, tepee rings, battlefields, historic communities, heritage barns, centennial farms and ranches, historic mine yards, rail yards, schools, libraries, courthouses, neighborhoods, and commercial districts, is directly linked to maintaining our quality of life and identity of communities; and

WHEREAS, the State of Montana owns more than 1,000 historic properties and buildings and is responsible for their stewardship on behalf of the people of Montana. Many more are owned by federal, local, and tribal governments and by nonprofit and private entities interested in maintaining and protecting them.

WHEREAS, preservation of historic places and cultural resources is a proven method of economic stimulus that may provide substantial economic and cultural benefits to Montanans; and

WHEREAS, preservation of heritage resources is encouraged and facilitated through public support, investment, and incentives; and

WHEREAS, heritage programs in Montana adopted by various communities, including Montana Main Street, Preserve America, and Certified Local Government Preservation Programs, would be greatly enhanced through an ongoing, adequate state partnership and support; and

WHEREAS, many communities have expressed interest in participating in such programs if additional financial assistance were available; and

WHEREAS, policies such as fully funding the State Historic Preservation Office and state parks, maintaining an up-to-date inventory and assessment of state-owned heritage properties, and encouraging preservation statewide through the Montana Main Street Program, local and cultural districts, local preservation

programs, state heritage tourism programs, a statewide revolving fund, enhanced state tax credits, local government bonding, the Cultural and Aesthetic Trust, and other potential funding mechanisms are in the interest of all Montanans and are all programs that deserve further evaluation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF Montana:

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

(1) conduct research on the impacts of historic preservation investment in Montana, including the stimulation of state and local commerce, the potential for collaborative heritage tourism programs and state heritage areas, and the development of incentive programs, such as revolving funds;

(2) evaluate the potential for state funding incentives with respect to offsetting the capital costs of sensitive historic renovation, including facade improvement and conversion of underutilized buildings to mixed residential and commercial functions;

(3) analyze the potential for implementing state programs to encourage preservation as a centerpiece for local economic development and tourism, including the feasibility of expanding the Montana Main Street Program to support local efforts among participating communities in economic development and downtown revitalization;

(4) evaluate for effectiveness existing mechanisms for funding state historic preservation;

(5) explore a variety of currently unused historic preservation funding mechanisms that could be implemented on the state level to provide an ongoing revenue stream for support and encouragement of preservation projects;

(6) investigate the potential to leverage additional federal, local, and other private funding sources; and

(7) review existing statutory tools and their effectiveness in providing adequate oversight and encouraging stewardship of Montana's historic and cultural properties.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2010.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 62nd Legislature.

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