

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 25

INTRODUCED BY A. HERTZ, A. CURTIS

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF STATUTES GOVERNING MUNICIPAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS AND WHETHER ADDITIONAL LOCAL CONTROL AND FLEXIBILITY IN THE PROVISION OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES TO MUNICIPALITIES IS WARRANTED.

WHEREAS, Montana state law requires municipalities of the first and second classes to have fire departments, while municipalities of the third class may contract for fire protection services; and

WHEREAS, outside of the boundaries of municipalities of the first and second classes, local fire protection may be provided through rural fire districts, county fire departments, fire service areas, and fire companies; and

WHEREAS, statutes governing municipal fire departments may force communities with growing populations to make unnecessary, inefficient, inequitable, and costly changes to fire department organizational structures; and

WHEREAS, the city of Belgrade will face an increase in cost of providing fire protection from approximately \$600,000 a year to over \$1.6 million a year and be forced to dissolve an effective and efficient relationship with Central Valley Fire District for no reason other than the statutory requirements for municipal fire departments; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 534, introduced in the 2017 Legislature, would have modified statutes governing municipal fire protection to allow municipalities of the first and second classes to choose how to provide fire protection; and

WHEREAS, municipal governments and the residents of a municipality are in the best position to determine how fire protection in their areas should be provided; and

WHEREAS, increased local control over the organization of local fire departments would provide the flexibility necessary to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in fire protection services.

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



