

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

May 14, 2021

The Honorable Wylie Galt
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

The Honorable Mark Blasdel
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Speaker Galt and President Blasdel:

In accordance with the power vested in me as the Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill 277 "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LAWS RELATED TO PROVIDING FOR A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS FOR CERTAIN GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES; REQUIRING DEPARTMENTS TO PRODUCE STRATEGIC PLANS AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS; PROVIDING FOR CERTAIN PUBLIC COMMENT PROVISIONS; LIMITING JUDICIAL REVIEW; REQUIRING THAT ONLY EXISTING RESOURCES MAY BE USED; PROVIDING DEFINITIONS; AMENDING SECTION 2-4-102, MCA; REPEALING SECTIONS 2-15-2221, 2-15-2222, 2-15-2223, 2-15-2224, 2-15-2225, AND 2-15-2226, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

I support the goal of HB 277 to try to improve the performance of state government. Accountability, efficient performance and good customer service are goals that I ran on and am committed to achieving by bringing tried and true private sector processes to state government.

However, HB 277 would impose another bureaucratic process on state agencies that would: create more administrative work; add costs; in part, duplicate processes I am already implementing; result in a rigid, three-year plan that does not coincide with the two and four-year strategic planning cycles of the legislature and the governor's office, and not provide for nimble adjustments (that are now common in private sector planning) to changing circumstances.

HB 277 would require state agencies to go through both an employee comment process and a formal public comment process to produce three-year formal strategic plans, performance measures, and annual performance reports. Three years is neither tied to the two-year legislative session cycle nor the gubernatorial election cycle, diminishing its relevance as legislative and gubernatorial elections occur and priorities change.

In addition, the day after I took the oath of office, I issued Executive Order 1-2021 creating the Red Tape Relief Advisory Council to conduct a comprehensive, top-to-bottom review of

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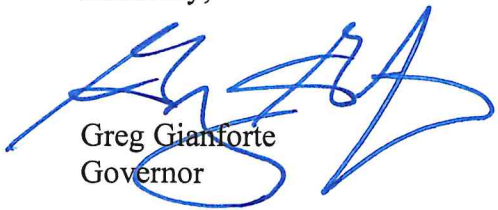
regulations in every state agency. Burdensome, unnecessary red tape ties up our small businesses, farms, and ranches. These regulations cost time and money. Ultimately, Montana consumers bear the burden with higher prices on goods and services, and the biggest burden falls on low and middle-income Montanans who are trying to make ends meet. To make Montana more competitive, we need to get a better handle on our regulatory scheme, and it's one of my top priorities. The council I have established will leave no stone unturned as they identify excessive, outdated, and unnecessary regulations, and will seek input from the Legislature, Montana citizens, business owners, and other appropriate stakeholders. Contrary to the work of the Council, HB 277 will add more bureaucratic burden on state agencies.

Given the steps I am taking to make government more accountable, efficient, and customer service oriented, HB 277 would distract the same key agency leaders from taking these steps and divert their time and resources to "check the boxes" required by HB 277 to produce a three-year document that may be infrequently used, especially after the next election. Although its goal is to improve performance, ironically, HB 277 would also cause more bureaucracy and cost to implement. HB 277 has a fairly significant fiscal impact and would cause work that will be, in part, redundant to work already being done, and of diminishing value as elections occur and goals evolve with new officials and changing circumstances in Montana. The executive branch needs a more flexible planning and measurement process than a rigid three-year process with taxpayers footing the bill.

The intent of HB 277 is laudable but my administration is already strongly committed to using more nimble processes, rooted in the private sector, to transform how state government conducts its business for the benefit of the people of Montana.

For these reasons, I am vetoing HB 277.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Secretary of State Christi Jacobson