



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Fiscal Note 2025 Biennium

Bill information:

HB0335 - Generally revise election laws related to absentee ballot list procedures (Bedey, David)

Status: As Introduced

- Significant Local Gov Impact
 Needs to be included in HB 2
 Technical Concerns
 Included in the Executive Budget
 Significant Long-Term Impacts
 Dedicated Revenue Form Attached

FISCAL SUMMARY

	<u>FY 2024</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2025</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2026</u> <u>Difference</u>	<u>FY 2027</u> <u>Difference</u>
Expenditures:				
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenue:				
General Fund	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Net Impact-General Fund Balance:	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$0</u>

Description of fiscal impact: HB 335 requires counties to mail a form every four years to all active electors on the absentee ballot list to affirm that the elector wants to continue to receive an absentee ballot. Electors who do not respond to this mailing are sent a second notification advising them they have been removed from the absentee ballot list. Although this legislation has no fiscal impact to the Office of Secretary of State, there are costs to the state's counties to implement the proposed requirements.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Assumptions:**Office of the Secretary of State**

1. While there may be a minimal fiscal impact, the Office of the Secretary of State will absorb the costs associated with implementing this bill within its existing operating budget.
2. This bill may have a fiscal impact on county election administrators.

Effect on County or Other Local Revenues or Expenditures:

Montana Association of Counties

1. HB 335 creates volatility in each county’s budget every four years.
2. Montana has approximately 503,923 registered absentee voters as of November 22, 2022. At approximately \$0.50 per individual envelope (includes envelope, form, and printing costs) and \$0.63 for postage, the initial mailing to absentee voters is estimated at \$569,433 (503,923 x \$1.13). This cost does not include staff time or other resources that may be required by each county to complete this mailing.
3. This legislation also requires counties to follow up with electors who do not respond within 60 days with a second mailing notifying them that they have been removed from the absentee ballot list. Removed electors must then register as an absentee voter to be placed back on the list.
4. If every absentee elector responds to the first mailing, the second mailing cost will be zero; if no absentee elector responds to the first mailing, the second mailing cost will be the same as the first mailing (\$569,433). This is a total of \$1,138,866 (\$569,433 x 2).
5. Given the assumptions above, total costs for all counties for the two mailings is estimated to be between \$569,433 and \$1,138,866 every fourth odd-numbered year beginning July 1, 2023. This number will vary based on the number of registered absentee voters.

NOT SIGNED BY SPONSOR

Sponsor’s Initials

Date



Budget Director’s Initials

2-2-23

Date