

PRESS RELEASE
December 20, 2019

Montana Legislature's "Legislative Week" Plans in Final Stages

During the week of January 13 through 17, 2020, the Montana Legislature is holding "Legislative Week" There will be training sessions for all legislators on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, and the morning of Wednesday, January 15, 2020. There will be many other legislative committees meeting on Monday, Wednesday afternoon, Thursday, and Friday providing an opportunity for legislators that are not on the committees and for the public to attend.

Please see the website: <https://leg.mt.gov/legweek/> to view the Overall Schedule and detailed information on the Wednesday morning tracks. Links will also be provided for each track and interim committee as available.

There will be opportunities for **public comment** at all legislative meetings. On Tuesday, space will be limited in Room 317 of the State Capitol. There will be space for the public and interested parties in Room 303 of the Capitol Building where the proceedings in Room 317 will be streamed live. When public comment is taken Tuesday afternoon, the public will be routed through Room 317 to provide comments.

PUBLIC & LEGISLATOR COMMENT SOUGHT

Please note that on Tuesday morning, January 14, at 8:00 a.m. in Room 137, the Steering Committee on the SB 310 Study of the Legislature and Budget Process will be seeking legislator and public comment on the following:

1. Any ideas on how to build knowledge and experience to strengthen the Legislature.
2. Do we need to change the structure to be more effective? Idea to consider: Annual sessions vs. biennial sessions (a change to annual sessions would require amendment of the Montana Constitution or calling the legislature back into special session through a motion passed by a majority of legislators):
 - a. If there were annual sessions, is there merit to the idea of limiting one session in the biennium on general bills and the second session in a biennium on budget bills?
 - b. If there were annual sessions, is there merit to changing to annual budgeting as well?
 - c. If there were annual sessions, what do you think of allowing bills to carry over from the first to second session within the biennium (would require either a constitutional or statutory amendment)?
 - d. How would a change to annual sessions affect different occupations and professions and the ability to serve?
3. Would changing the timing of the start of session be helpful?
4. How could we better integrate policy and budget during the session and the interim?
5. If major changes to the legislature were to be desired, should there be some sort of commission with wider representation from the public and stakeholders to study the proposals and make recommendations?

Notes:

The Senate parking lot (the lower lot south of the Capitol Building and Lockey Street) will be reserved for legislators for the full week Monday, January 13, 2020 through Friday, January 17, 2020. The House parking lot (parking on the northside of the Capitol Building) will be reserved for legislators for Monday, January 13, 2020 thru Thursday, January 16, 2020.

Contact: Legislative Services Division, 444-3064, or sfox@mt.gov