

MISSOULA LOBBYING REPORT
Week of Jan. 23, 2017
John MacDonald, Registered Lobbyist

Most attention continues to be focused on a series of TIF-related bills, as well as direct lobbying efforts in support of infrastructure funding, including provisions for a local-option authority bill and a comprehensive fuel tax.

Local government lobbyists made important progress on two key TIF bills, and continue to push for changes in or defeat of several others, outlined below.

HB94: Generally revise public safety officer standards/training council laws.

Position: Oppose without amendments. Support with.

MacDonald and other interested parties continue to work on details of this bill, specifically concerning the need to ensure private companies can contract with local governments to provide pretrial and misdemeanor parole and probation services.

MacDonald met Jan. 26th with the lobbyist for MCS and the county to review, edit and eventually approve amendments to preserve these services. Work to continue.

Status: Hearing held. Awaiting amendments

HB134: Revise school funding related to facilities

Position: Oppose.

No hearing scheduled yet. MacDonald continues to work closely with the League and other municipalities to oppose this bill. This has included outreach to allies such as MACO.

Status: Pending

SB34: Amend laws related to an urban renewal agency board of commissioners

Position: Oppose without amendments. Support with.

After passing out of committee without the amendment we wanted, this was scheduled for a second reading on the Senate floor, but the sponsor pulled it. He has indicated he intends to return the bill to Senate Local Government and table it.

Status: Passed Senate Local Government. Floor action canceled.

SB27: Amend TIF laws related to public hearings and reporting.

Position: (Changed) Support Amended Version

Kelly Lynch and Tim Burton with the league met with the sponsor and got agreement on amendments approved by the City of Missoula and others that address our concerns as well as the sponsor's concerns about reporting requirements. Bill passed out of committee.

Status: Senate Tax. Will be scheduled for second reading.

HB250: Require county and school district approval for adoption of TIF provision

Position: Oppose. (Amendments may be offered)

Chris Behan testified against the bill Jan. 24th along with representatives from the League, Kalispell, Butte. MacDonald continues direct lobbying efforts against the bill, but there are discussions about an amendment that would require local governments to have formal meetings with the school board and county before TIF formation to give them the opportunity to be involved. This would take away the “veto” authority that now exists in the bill. Such an amendment would be supported by the city.

Status: House Local Government hearing Jan. 24th , Pending executive action or amendments.

HB181: Establish requirements for police dogs.

Position: Oppose without amendments.

MacDonald testified on behalf of the Missoula police in opposition to this bill. Committee tabled it on a voice vote Jan. 24th.

Status: Tabled in House Judiciary Committee.

HB194: Prohibit local restrictions on electronic devices while driving.

Position: Oppose

MacDonald testified against, along with representatives from other communities, law enforcement and the League. Bill made it out of committee Jan. 20 on a narrow vote, but died on the floor.

Status: DIED on House floor.

SB130: Revise tax increment finance laws

Position: Support

MacDonald testified along with the league and MACO at Jan. 24 hearing on this bill that add to the definition of costs that can be paid with TIF money. Would include for energy efficiency expenditures. Good hearing

Status: Hearing held. Awaiting executive action.

SB106: Revise laws related to use of certain chemical de-icers on Montana highways.

Position: Oppose.

MacDonald testified against, citing Missoula’s federal air issues. Joined by MACO and MDOT in opposition

Status: Hearing Held Jan. 24. Awaiting executive action.

SB98: Property ownership fairness act.

Position: Oppose.

MacDonald unable to attend the Jan. 27th hearing, but we are on record opposing this bill and will be directly lobbying legislators to oppose it. The bill has a substantial fiscal note and is unlikely to pass.

Status: Hearing held Jan. 27 in Senate Judiciary. Awaiting executive action.

SB155: Prohibit local government regulation of agricultural seed

Position: Oppose.

Bill just came out. Could have impacts on local government ability to control noxious weed and other issues.

Status: Bill printed. Expect hearing to be scheduled soon.

LC2325: Local option infrastructure investment and property tax relief act

Position: Support

This bill is still in draft, but we are already in talks with supporters as well as known opponents to lay the ground work for this to hopefully move forward. This included direct lobbying by MacDonald of several legislators.

Status: Bill not yet introduced.

LC1152: Generally revise laws related to non-discrimination

Position: Support/Monitor

Status: Bill not yet introduced.

LC1769: Limit TIF revenue to local mills

Position: Oppose

Language just came out. We will be opposing and need to get comments

Status: Bill drafted. Expect it to be scheduled for hearing soon.

ADDITIONAL DIRECT LOBBYING:

Along with the league and others, we are active participants in the Montana Infrastructure Coalition, helping raise awareness of infrastructure needs and building support among legislative members. Efforts include direct contact with more than a dozen lawmakers in the House and Senate. We have been actively seeking support from legislators on HB14, the long-range bonding bill for infrastructure projects.