

DRAFT CITY OF BILLINGS 2015 LEGISLATIVE ISSUES **DRAFT**
November 2014

TOPIC	RECOMMENDATION	REASON
Local Impact Tax Authority	Support	Would provide additional revenue for local government purposes and address impacts. May include revenue sharing and property tax relief. Topic is important resolution of League of Cities.
Medicaid Expansion	Monitor <u>Support</u>	Would add an estimated 70,000 persons to insurance coverage and reduce unreimbursed costs to hospitals and medical professionals. Should include Medicaid reform. Expected to lower medical costs and provide new jobs. Indirectly impacts local governments.
Early Edge Education	Monitor <u>Support</u>	Governor's requested \$35 million funding for early childhood education.
Infrastructure Development for Eastern Montana	Support	Governor's \$45 million bonding request to fund infrastructure development in Eastern Montana.
Satellite Crime Lab	Support	Law enforcement in Eastern Montana would benefit from a lab located in Billings to provide crime lab services supplementing the State Crime Lab in Missoula.
Prohibit Public Intoxication	Support	Adding public intoxication as an <u>an</u> offense would help local governments manage transient population issues.
Increase Reserve for Building Code Enforcement	Support	The current reserve authority for building code enforcement is limited to the amount needed for 12 months. Increasing the reserve authority amount to 24 months would allow for more even and efficient code enforcement ability.
Exemption for Seasonal Unemployment Insurance	Support	An exemption through an application process may be proposed to <u>would</u> reduce or eliminate unemployment insurance for seasonal employees. This would "save" the City UI costs.

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Property Tax Re-Appraisal Cycle Reduction	Support	The DOR intends to propose a one or two year re-appraisal cycle. Others may propose a three or four year cycle. Shorter cycles will more accurately reflect current property values and should not require the extreme mitigation that is needed for 6 year cycles.
Entitlement Program Reimbursement	Support	There will be strong support for continuation of entitlement programs and funding under current law. Changes resulting in funding reductions will be opposed.
Civil commitment and other proposals regarding homeless and transient issues	Support	The issues surrounding homeless and transient populations involve all aspects of city services, including mental health, public safety, drug use, and other law enforcement matters. A comprehensive program to address the issues would benefit the City.
Tax Increment Finance Districts	Oppose change	The City should oppose any changes to TIFD laws. The system works well under current laws.
Forfeiture of Property under Drug Laws	Oppose change	Law Enforcement supports and benefits from current forfeiture laws. Changes would weaken the programs.
PERS Retirement Amendments	Support Oppose	Support an amendment to fix calculation problem and follow Legislative intent from the 2013 Legislative Session. Oppose proposals to expand the definition of “compensation” that would increase retirement benefits and require additional contributions to the retirement systems.
Presumptive Illness	Oppose	Bills to enact presumptive illness healthworkers’ compensation coverage for Firefighters and Police Officers are expected. Local Governments will oppose due to cost and other factors.
Tax Appeal Process Amendments	Support	The amendments are intended to help expedite resolution of tax protests by industrial and utility taxpayers.