

MISSOULA LOBBYING REPORT  
Week of Feb. 20, 2017  
John MacDonald, Registered Lobbyist

The Infrastructure Coalition was finally able to roll out its Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Act, HB473, which includes an 8-cent per gallon gas tax to begin better funding infrastructure projects at the state and local level. A successful hearing on Feb. 22 that went for nearly three hours.

Lobbyists for local government interests made significant, positive headway on critical bills related to TIFs. Working with Rep. Jeff Essman, we ensured several of the most onerous died in committee, agreed to one TIF bill, and agreeing in principle to support efforts to study this issue much more closely during the interim, hopefully through a newly created interim committee dedicated exclusively to local government issues.

### **TIF Bills First**

#### **[HB359](#): Limit tax increment financing revenue to local mills.**

Position: Oppose.

Terrible bill that would limit TIF revenue to local mills only, removing mills collected on behalf of school districts, mills supporting elementary and high school retirement obligations, public school equalization mills, u-system mills and permissive levies.

Status: TABLED IN House Tax.

#### **[HB30](#): Remove voted levies approved after creation of TIF from tax increment provision**

Position: Neutral (changed from Oppose)

Another bill from the RTIC. We let this one go as part of an agreement to .

Status: TRANSMITTED to the Senate

#### **[HB411](#): Limiting use of TIF money. (Façade bill)**

Position: Oppose

Adam Hertz's bill dealing with concerns about TIF money being spent on private businesses within TIF Districts. Chris Behan testified on behalf of the city.

Status: TABLED in House Tax.

#### **[HB396](#): Revise laws related to tax increment financing**

Position: Support.

This is Rep. Grubbs' "replacement" bill to the one that would have given schools and counties "veto" power over TIF district creations.

Status: TRANSMITTED to the Senate.

#### **[SB27](#): Amend TIF laws related to public hearings and reporting.**

Position: (Changed) Support Amended Version

Kelly Lynch and Tim Burton with the league did substantial work with the sponsor to amend this to address concerns. A couple more have since arisen that Rep. Essman has asked for clarification on, dealing with a specific issue in Billings. Passed Senate. Hearing on amended version held in House Tax Feb. 9  
Status: Awaiting more possible amendments and executive action in House Tax.

**HB134: Revise school funding related to facilities**

Position: Neutral (CHANGED from oppose)

HB 134 originally would have removed the 95 school mills from the TIF calculation, redirecting it to fund school facility improvements through the state's Quality Schools Facility Grant Program. Essman agreed to an amendment to take that provision out of the bill and we remove our opposition.

Status: AMENDED version passed House Tax

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

Position: Oppose. (Amendments may be offered)

The league was working on amendments, but the bill was tabled in committee on Feb. 2

Status: House Local Government TABLED. (See HB396 above)

**HB413: Revise laws related to use of TIF financing.**

Position: Oppose.

From MLCT: The bill provides for a recapture provision if building improvements are made with TIF funds. If controlling stock or other equity interest in the building is sold, leased, or transferred within 5 years of the TIF funded improvements, 100% of the funds must be paid back; 80% if within 6 years; decreasing by 20% each year thereafter. No recapture after 10 years; no recapture if ownership conveyed to a governmental entity. (2) The bill provides for a direct court review of any decision made under Title 7, Chapter 15, Parts 42 or 43 by any taxpayer or taxing jurisdiction. Chris Behan testified for the city in opposition, along with other communities, MACO and the league.

Status: Awaiting executive action in House Tax.

**OTHER BILLS:**

**NEW:**

**SB250: Revise laws related to prosecutorial immunity.**

Position: Support.

MacDonald testified in favor

Status: Passed Senate.

**HB463: Prohibit chronically incapacitated substance abuse in public places.**

Position: Support (Due to local control component)

Request from Billings. A similar idea last session ran into roadblocks. Billings is asking for the city's support. We are reviewing.

Status: TABLED in Committee

**HB473: Revise highway revenue laws.**

Position: Support

This is the Bridge and Road Safety and Security Act, which includes a fuel tax provision with money going in part to local governments for infrastructure work. Engen and Bickel came to Helena for the Feb. 22 hearing

Status: Awaiting executive action.

**HB422: Generally revising laws related to local government; withholding or offsetting** entitlement share payments to local government under certain circumstances.

Position: Neutral/Monitor

Discussed with Engen and Bickel. This bill comes out of a situation in Glacier County that legislators want to address statutorily. The MLCT has been involved in crafting this to ensure it is very narrow and won't impact cities that are compliant.

We will monitor.

Status: Awaiting executive action

**LC2325: Local option infrastructure investment and property tax relief act**

Position: Support

This bill draft is now available for review <http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2017/billpdf/LC2325.pdf>

Status: Draft language released. No hearing set.

**HB417: Generally revise laws related to non-discrimination**

Position: Support/Monitor

Status: TABLED in committee.

**UPDATES:**

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

Position: Oppose.

MacDonald testified against bill in Senate Finance and Claims after also testifying opposed in Senate Highways and Transportation. It got out of committee and then was tabled on the Senate floor. A motion to "indefinitely table" the bill failed and, instead, the bill was sent to Senate Finance and Claims for another hearing. This bill remains unlikely to pass, but is still alive at the moment. My hope is that Finance and Claims will not act on it, however, due to the substantial fiscal note.

Status: TABLE in committee..

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

Position: Support amended version.

MacDonald worked with other interested parties on this one, largely to ensure that private businesses can contract with local governments to provide pretrial and misdemeanor services. Heavily amended bill but I think we are good with the final version

**[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. 24<sup>th</sup>.

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 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.

Status: TABLED in Senate Local Government.

**[SB98: Property ownership fairness act.](#)**

Position: Oppose.

MacDonald unable to attend the Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

Status: DIED on the Senate floor.

**[SB155: Prohibit local government regulation of agricultural seed](#)**

Position: Oppose/Monitor

We missed the hearing due to workload.

Status: Passed The Senate

**ADDITIONAL DIRECT LOBBYING:**

The city of Missoula continues to be heavily involved in the direct lobbying in support of Frank Garner's Bridge and Road Safety and Accountability Act, which could give local governments a good boost in infrastructure funding.