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HOUSE BILL NO. 863

INTRODUCED BY L. JONES, J. ESP, C. GLIMM, D. BEDEY, B. MERCER, E. TILLEMAN, K. WALSH

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING STATE FINANCE LAWS; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AMENDING SECTION 17-7-102, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 17-7-102, MCA, is amended to read:

"17-7-102. (Temporary) Definitions. As used in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Additional services" means different services or more of the same services.
- (2) "Agency" means all offices, departments, boards, commissions, institutions, universities, colleges, and any other person or any other administrative unit of state government that spends or encumbers public money by virtue of an appropriation from the legislature under 17-8-101.
- (3) "Approving authority" means:
 - (a) the governor or the governor's designated representative for executive branch agencies;
 - (b) the chief justice of the supreme court or the chief justice's designated representative for judicial branch agencies;
 - (c) the speaker for the house of representatives;
 - (d) the president for the senate;
 - (e) appropriate legislative committees or a designated representative for legislative branch agencies; or
 - (f) the board of regents of higher education or its designated representative for the university system.
- (4) (a) "Base budget" means the resources for the operation of state government that are of an ongoing and nonextraordinary nature in the current biennium. The base budget for the state general fund and state special revenue funds may not exceed that level of funding authorized by the previous legislature.
- (b) The term does not include:

1 (i) funding for water adjudication if the accountability benchmarks contained in 85-2-271 are not
2 met;

3 (ii) funding for petroleum storage tank leak prevention if the accountability benchmarks in 75-11-
4 521 are not met.

5 (5) "Budget amendment" means a temporary appropriation as provided in Title 17, chapter 7, part
6 4.

7 (6) "Budget stabilization reserve" means the amount of unappropriated fund balance in the budget
8 stabilization reserve fund up to 16% of all general revenue appropriations in the second year of the biennium.

9 (7) "Emergency" means a catastrophe, disaster, calamity, or other serious unforeseen and
10 unanticipated circumstance that has occurred subsequent to the time that an agency's appropriation was made,
11 that was clearly not within the contemplation of the legislature and the governor, and that affects one or more
12 functions of a state agency and the agency's expenditure requirements for the performance of the function or
13 functions.

14 (8) "Funds subject to appropriation" means those funds required to be paid out of the treasury as
15 set forth in 17-8-101.

16 (9) "General revenue appropriations" means appropriations from the general fund ~~or~~ and the
17 school equalization and property tax reduction account in 20-9-336.

18 (10) "Necessary" means essential to the public welfare and of a nature that cannot wait until the
19 next legislative session for legislative consideration.

20 (11) "New proposals" means requests to provide new nonmandated services, to change program
21 services, to eliminate existing services, or to change sources of funding. For purposes of establishing the
22 present law base, the distinction between new proposals and the adjustments to the base budget to develop
23 the present law base is to be determined by the existence of constitutional or statutory requirements for the
24 proposed expenditure. Any proposed increase or decrease that is not based on those requirements is
25 considered a new proposal.

26 (12) "Operating reserve" means an amount equal to 8.3% of all general revenue appropriations in
27 the second year of the biennium.

28 (13) "Present law base" means that level of funding needed under present law to maintain

1 operations and services at the level authorized by the previous legislature, including but not limited to:

2 (a) changes resulting from legally mandated workload, caseload, or enrollment increases or
3 decreases;

4 (b) changes in funding requirements resulting from constitutional or statutory schedules or
5 formulas;

6 (c) inflationary or deflationary adjustments; and

7 (d) elimination of nonrecurring appropriations.

8 (14) "Program" means a principal organizational or budgetary unit within an agency.

9 (15) "Requesting agency" means the agency of state government that has requested a specific
10 budget amendment.

11 (16) "University system unit" means the board of regents of higher education; office of the
12 commissioner of higher education; university of Montana, with campuses at Missoula, Butte, Dillon, and
13 Helena; Montana state university, with campuses at Bozeman, Billings, Havre, and Great Falls; the agricultural
14 experiment station, with central offices at Bozeman; the forest and conservation experiment station, with central
15 offices at Missoula; the cooperative extension service, with central offices at Bozeman; the bureau of mines and
16 geology, with central offices at Butte; the fire services training school at Great Falls; and the community
17 colleges supervised and coordinated by the board of regents pursuant to 20-15-103. (Terminates June 30,
18 2028--sec. 11, Ch. 269, L. 2015.)

19 **17-7-102. (Effective July 1, 2028) Definitions.** As used in this chapter, the following definitions
20 apply:

21 (1) "Additional services" means different services or more of the same services.

22 (2) "Agency" means all offices, departments, boards, commissions, institutions, universities,
23 colleges, and any other person or any other administrative unit of state government that spends or encumbers
24 public money by virtue of an appropriation from the legislature under 17-8-101.

25 (3) "Approving authority" means:

26 (a) the governor or the governor's designated representative for executive branch agencies;

27 (b) the chief justice of the supreme court or the chief justice's designated representative for judicial
28 branch agencies;

1 (c) the speaker for the house of representatives;

2 (d) the president for the senate;

3 (e) appropriate legislative committees or a designated representative for legislative branch

4 agencies; or

5 (f) the board of regents of higher education or its designated representative for the university

6 system.

7 (4) "Base budget" means the resources for the operation of state government that are of an
8 ongoing and nonextraordinary nature in the current biennium. The base budget for the state general fund and
9 state special revenue funds may not exceed that level of funding authorized by the previous legislature.

10 (5) "Budget amendment" means a temporary appropriation as provided in Title 17, chapter 7, part
11 4.

12 (6) "Budget stabilization reserve" means the amount of unappropriated fund balance in the budget
13 stabilization reserve fund up to 16% of all general revenue appropriations in the second year of the biennium.

14 (7) "Emergency" means a catastrophe, disaster, calamity, or other serious unforeseen and
15 unanticipated circumstance that has occurred subsequent to the time that an agency's appropriation was made,
16 that was clearly not within the contemplation of the legislature and the governor, and that affects one or more
17 functions of a state agency and the agency's expenditure requirements for the performance of the function or
18 functions.

19 (8) "Funds subject to appropriation" means those funds required to be paid out of the treasury as
20 set forth in 17-8-101.

21 (9) "General revenue appropriations" means appropriations from the general fund ~~or~~ and the
22 school equalization and property tax reduction account in 20-9-336.

23 (10) "Necessary" means essential to the public welfare and of a nature that cannot wait until the
24 next legislative session for legislative consideration.

25 (11) "New proposals" means requests to provide new nonmandated services, to change program
26 services, to eliminate existing services, or to change sources of funding. For purposes of establishing the
27 present law base, the distinction between new proposals and the adjustments to the base budget to develop
28 the present law base is to be determined by the existence of constitutional or statutory requirements for the

1 proposed expenditure. Any proposed increase or decrease that is not based on those requirements is
2 considered a new proposal.

3 (12) "Operating reserve" means an amount equal to 8.3% of all general revenue appropriations in
4 the second year of the biennium.

5 (13) "Present law base" means that level of funding needed under present law to maintain
6 operations and services at the level authorized by the previous legislature, including but not limited to:

7 (a) changes resulting from legally mandated workload, caseload, or enrollment increases or
8 decreases;

9 (b) changes in funding requirements resulting from constitutional or statutory schedules or
10 formulas;

11 (c) inflationary or deflationary adjustments; and

12 (d) elimination of nonrecurring appropriations.

13 (14) "Program" means a principal organizational or budgetary unit within an agency.

14 (15) "Requesting agency" means the agency of state government that has requested a specific
15 budget amendment.

16 (16) "University system unit" means the board of regents of higher education; office of the
17 commissioner of higher education; university of Montana, with campuses at Missoula, Butte, Dillon, and
18 Helena; Montana state university, with campuses at Bozeman, Billings, Havre, and Great Falls; the agricultural
19 experiment station, with central offices at Bozeman; the forest and conservation experiment station, with central
20 offices at Missoula; the cooperative extension service, with central offices at Bozeman; the bureau of mines and
21 geology, with central offices at Butte; the fire services training school at Great Falls; and the community
22 colleges supervised and coordinated by the board of regents pursuant to 20-15-103."
23

24 NEW SECTION. Section 2. Appropriation. (1) There is appropriated \$100,000 from the Montana-
25 Ireland trade and development special revenue account to the department of commerce for the biennium
26 beginning July 1, 2025, for implementing the provisions of Senate Bill No. 320.

27 (2) It is the intent of the legislature that the appropriation be included in the base budget for the
28 department of commerce for the biennium beginning July 1, 2027.

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2 NEW SECTION. Section 3. Appropriation. (1) There is appropriated \$6.55 million from the general
3 fund to the office of the state public defender for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025, for payment of contracted
4 services.

5 (2) The legislature intends that the appropriation in this section be considered part of the ongoing
6 base for the next legislative session.

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8 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2025.

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- END -

