

1 SENATE BILL NO. 42  
 2 INTRODUCED BY S. HINEBAUCH  
 3 BY REQUEST OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION  
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 5 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING APPLICATIONS FOR EASEMENTS ON STATE TRUST  
 6 LANDS; MODIFYING APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING FACILITIES; EXEMPTING THE  
 7 DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW  
 8 AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW FOR CERTAIN EXISTING EASEMENT PURPOSES; AMENDING  
 9 SECTIONS 77-2-101, 77-2-102, 77-2-103, AND 77-2-107, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE  
 10 EFFECTIVE DATE."

11  
12 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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14 **Section 1.** Section 77-2-101, MCA, is amended to read:

15 **"77-2-101. Easements for specific uses.** (1) Upon proper application as provided in ~~77-2-102~~ 77-2-  
16 102(1) through (5), the board may grant easements on state lands for the following purposes:

- 17 (a) schoolhouse sites and grounds;
- 18 (b) public parks;
- 19 (c) community buildings;
- 20 (d) cemeteries;
- 21 (e) conservation purposes:
  - 22 (i) to the department of fish, wildlife, and parks for parcels that are surrounded by or adjacent to
  - 23 land owned by the department of fish, wildlife, and parks as of January 1, 2001;
  - 24 (ii) to a nonprofit corporation for parcels that are surrounded by or adjacent to land owned by that
  - 25 same nonprofit corporation as of January 1, 2001; and
  - 26 (iii) to a nonprofit corporation for the Owen Sowerwine natural area located within section 16,
  - 27 township 28 north, range 21 west, in Flathead County; and
  - 28 (f) for other public uses.

1 (2) The board may grant easements on state lands for the following purposes:

2 (a) right-of-way across or upon any portion of state lands for any public highway or street, any  
3 ~~ditch canal, ditch, flume, aqueduct, pipe,~~ reservoir, railroad, private road, ~~or telegraph or~~ telephone line, water  
4 conveyance for irrigation purposes, or any other public use as defined in 70-30-102;

5 (b) any private building or private sewage system that encroaches on state lands; ~~or~~

6 (c) pursuant to 77-1-1112 or 77-1-1115, the use of the bed of a navigable river ~~pursuant to 77-1-~~  
7 ~~1112 or 77-1-1115;~~ or

8 (d) pursuant to 77-2-102(6), existing private access roads, county roads, and utility facilities  
9 constructed on state lands prior to October 1, 1997."

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11 **Section 2.** Section 77-2-102, MCA, is amended to read:

12 **"77-2-102. Application for easement -- survey exemptions.** (1) Application for an easement on  
13 state land must be made to the department. Except as provided in subsections (3) through (5), the application  
14 must describe the proposed right-of-way according to survey, show the necessity for the proposed highway or  
15 street or other easement, and give any additional information that the department requires.

16 (2) This application must be accompanied by two exact copies of the official plat of the proposed  
17 highway, street, or other easement, verified by the affidavit of the engineer or surveyor who prepared the  
18 application. These plats must show the quantity of land taken by the proposed highway or street or other  
19 easement for each 40-acre tract or government lot of state land over or through which it passes and also the  
20 amount of land remaining in each portion of that 40-acre tract or government lot. When considered necessary  
21 by the department, these plats must show all these facts for smaller subdivisions as the circumstances may  
22 render desirable for the state.

23 (3) The application must include the affidavit of a licensed engineer or professional surveyor  
24 stating that the methodology used is known to be accurate to within 5 meters. The survey must be tied to an  
25 established section corner or 1/4 corner monument. The department may request greater accuracy if the  
26 department determines that the information is needed to adequately describe the easement.

27 (4) If the purpose of the right-of-way applied for is the transmission or distribution of electrical  
28 energy or the construction and operation of pipelines or telephone, telegraph, or radio systems, the plats and

1 measurements need not be given. An exact geographical survey is not required, but the application must  
2 include the description of the location of the center line of the right-of-way that refers to an established  
3 monument within a filed corner recordation form, certificate of survey, or subdivision plat. The accuracy  
4 requirements of subsection (3) must be met. The entire right-of-way may be applied for in one application with  
5 only one plat of the entire right-of-way required. An archaeological survey is not required if, in the opinion of the  
6 department, heritage property would not be impacted.

7 (5) (a) If the purpose of the right-of-way applied for is a regional water authority provided for in Title  
8 75, chapter 6, part 3, the plats and measurements need not be given. An exact geographical survey is not  
9 required, but the application must include the description of the location of the center line of the right-of-way.

10 (b) The application provided for in subsection (5)(a) must be accompanied by electronic global  
11 positioning system data in the Montana coordinate system, the easement location depicted on a topographical  
12 map to a scale of 1:24,000, easement coordinates, and the quantity of land taken in each quarter-quarter  
13 section.

14 (6) (a) The department may waive survey requirements for rights-of-way or easements provided  
15 for in 77-2-101(2)(d) when there is sufficient information to define the boundaries of the right-of-way or  
16 easement to record the right-of-way or easement.

17 (b) An application for a private access road to private property must include:

18 (i) a description of appurtenant private lands historically accessed by the access road;

19 (ii) aerial photographs or images by an agency of the United States government ~~dated prior to~~  
20 October 1, 1997, that depict the access road; and

21 (iii) easement location depicted on a topographical map to a scale of 1:24,000.

22 (c) An application for an existing county road must include:

23 (i) documentation establishing the road pursuant to Title 7, chapter 14, part 26;

24 (ii) aerial photographs or images by an agency of the United States government ~~dated prior to~~  
25 October 1, 1997, that depict the county road; and

26 (iii) easement location depicted on a topographical map to a scale of 1:24,000.

27 (d) An application for an existing public utility infrastructure must include:

28 (i) evidence of installation ~~prior to October 1, 1997,~~ through submission of plant staking sheets,

1 photographic evidence of dated infrastructure tags, or similar evidence; and  
2 (ii) easement location depicted on a topographical map to a scale of 1:24,000."

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4 **Section 3.** Section 77-2-103, MCA, is amended to read:

5 **"77-2-103. Processing of application.** (1) Upon the filing of an application and plats, the department  
6 shall, whenever it considers it necessary, examine the proposed right-of-way and report its findings to the  
7 board. The board shall consider the application and report and take any action it considers proper, including the  
8 fixing of compensation and damages to be paid to the state. The compensation must be the full market value of  
9 the estate or interest disposed of through the granting of the right-of-way easement, and the damages must be  
10 the actual damages resulting to the remaining land as nearly as they can be ascertained. If the right-of-way is  
11 granted according to the plat, the plat is the official plat of the right-of-way and must be retained in the office of  
12 the department.

13 (2) If the state land over or through which a right-of-way is applied for is under certificate of  
14 purchase or sales contract, the purchaser or the purchaser's assignee must be made a party to the proceedings  
15 and the purchaser's or assignee's consent in writing to the laying out and establishment of the proposed  
16 highway, street, or other easement and to the amount of compensation and damages to be paid must be filed  
17 with the board before the right-of-way is granted. The board is the judge of how much compensation and  
18 damages must be paid to the state and applied on the certificate of purchase or sales contract and of how  
19 much, if any, must be paid to the purchaser, as the circumstances in each individual case warrant. This  
20 subsection applies to all grants of rights-of-way on state lands.

21 (3) If the purpose of the right-of-way applied for is a regional water authority provided for in Title  
22 75, chapter 6, part 3, the provisions of 77-2-351 related to public entities apply.

23 (4) A right-of-way easement issued pursuant to 77-2-102(6) is exempt from the requirements of  
24 Title 22, chapter 3, part 4, and Title 75, chapter 1, parts 1 and 2.

25 (5) Damages for a lessee's improvements, crops, or leasehold interests are not allowed for right-  
26 of-way easement applications made pursuant to 77-2-102(6)."

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28 **Section 4.** Section 77-2-107, MCA, is amended to read: