

HOUSE BILL NO. 251

INTRODUCED BY L. JONES, S. VINTON, M. REGIER, R. KNUDSEN, J. SMALL, S. FITZPATRICK, D.

SALOMON, J. ELLSWORTH, K. BOGNER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING STATE FINANCE LAWS; CREATING THE DEBT AND LIABILITY FREE ACCOUNT; PROVIDING FOR A TRANSFER AND ALLOCATIONS OF INTEREST INTO THE DEBT AND LIABILITY FREE ACCOUNT; PROVIDING A TRANSFER TO THE STATEWIDE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM ACCOUNT; PROVIDING FOR A STATUTORY APPROPRIATION; PROVIDING FOR AN EQUAL TRANSFER OF UNOBLIGATED FUNDS FROM THE DEBT AND LIABILITY FREE ACCOUNT TO THE CAPITAL DEVELOPMENTS LONG-RANGE BUILDING PROGRAM ACCOUNT AND THE GENERAL FUND IN 2027; AMENDING SECTIONS 17-6-202, 17-7-502, AND 44-4-1607, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A RETROACTIVE APPLICABILITY DATE."

WHEREAS, there is a benefit to the citizens of Montana to pay off debts and be debt free in 2023; and

WHEREAS, paying off debts and other financial liabilities of the State of Montana is a responsible use of one-time funds; and

WHEREAS, issuing and paying off public debt when prudent is and should remain a standard function of state government; and

WHEREAS, paying off debt now allows more capacity to responsibly pay for capital expenditures via financing in the future, when desired by the Executive and Legislature.

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

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Debt and liability free account -- rules for deposits and transfers -- purpose. (1) There is an account in the state special revenue fund established by 17-2-102 known as the debt and liability free account.

(2) The purpose of the debt and liability free account is to:

(a) pay the principal, interest, premiums, and any costs or fees associated with redeeming

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1 outstanding bonds, notes, or other obligations that have been authorized and issued pursuant to the laws of
2 Montana and that are currently subject to optional redemption;

3 (b) pay the principal, interest, premiums, and any costs or fees associated with defeasing
4 outstanding bonds, notes, or other obligations that have been authorized and issued pursuant to the laws of
5 Montana that are not currently subject to optional redemption;

6 (c) pay in whole or in part legally resolved nonpension financial liabilities of the state of Montana;

7 (d) pay personal services costs of a state agency to avoid or delay incurrence or declaration of a
8 formal exigency; and

9 (e) pay in whole or in part the cost of repairs to existing infrastructure within the state that, if made,
10 are likely to prevent catastrophic loss of life or property.

11 (3) The legislature may transfer money from other funds to the account, and the money in the
12 account is subject to legislative fund transfers.

13 (4) For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025,
14 interest income received pursuant to 17-6-202(2) is deposited into the account.

15 (5) Funds in the debt and liability free account are statutorily appropriated, as provided in 17-7-
16 502, to the governor's office of budget and program planning and must be used in accordance with the
17 requirements of this section.

18 (6) Funds expended from the account in this section may not be included in the calculation of
19 annual transfers in 17-7-208.

20
21 **Section 2.** Section 17-6-202, MCA, is amended to read:

22 **"17-6-202. Investment funds -- general provisions.** (1) For each treasury fund account into which
23 state funds are segregated by the department of administration pursuant to 17-2-106, individual transactions
24 and totals of all investments shall be separately recorded to the extent directed by the department.

25 (2) However, the securities purchased and cash on hand for all treasury fund accounts not
26 otherwise specifically designated by law or by the provisions of a gift, donation, grant, legacy, bequest, or
27 devise from which the fund account originates to be invested shall be pooled in an account to be designated
28 "treasury cash account" and placed in one of the investment funds designated in 17-6-203. ~~The~~ Except for the

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1 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, through the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, the share of the income for this
2 account shall be credited to the general fund. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022, through the fiscal year
3 ending June 30, 2025, the share of the income for this account must be credited to the debt and liability free
4 account established in [section 1].

5 (3) If, within the list in 17-6-203 of separate investment funds, more than one investment fund is
6 included which may be held jointly with others under the same separate listing, all investments purchased for
7 that separate investment fund shall be held jointly for all the accounts participating therein, which shall share all
8 capital gains and losses and income pro rata."

9
10 **Section 3.** Section 17-7-502, MCA, is amended to read:

11 **"17-7-502. Statutory appropriations -- definition -- requisites for validity.** (1) A statutory
12 appropriation is an appropriation made by permanent law that authorizes spending by a state agency without
13 the need for a biennial legislative appropriation or budget amendment.

14 (2) Except as provided in subsection (4), to be effective, a statutory appropriation must comply with
15 both of the following provisions:

16 (a) The law containing the statutory authority must be listed in subsection (3).

17 (b) The law or portion of the law making a statutory appropriation must specifically state that a
18 statutory appropriation is made as provided in this section.

19 (3) The following laws are the only laws containing statutory appropriations: 2-17-105; 5-11-120; 5-
20 11-407; 5-13-403; 5-13-404; 7-4-2502; 7-4-2924; 7-32-236; 10-1-108; 10-1-1202; 10-1-1303; 10-2-603; 10-2-
21 807; 10-3-203; 10-3-310; 10-3-312; 10-3-314; 10-3-802; 10-3-1304; 10-4-304; 10-4-310; 15-1-121; 15-1-218;
22 15-31-165; 15-31-1004; 15-31-1005; 15-35-108; 15-36-332; 15-37-117; 15-39-110; 15-65-121; 15-70-101; 15-
23 70-130; 15-70-433; 16-11-119; 16-11-509; 17-3-106; 17-3-212; 17-3-222; 17-3-241; 17-6-101; [section 1]; 17-7-
24 215; 18-11-112; 19-3-319; 19-3-320; 19-6-404; 19-6-410; 19-9-702; 19-13-604; 19-17-301; 19-18-512; 19-19-
25 305; 19-19-506; 19-20-604; 19-20-607; 19-21-203; 20-8-107; 20-9-534; 20-9-622; [20-15-328]; 20-26-617; 20-
26 26-1503; 22-1-327; 22-3-116; 22-3-117; [22-3-1004]; 23-4-105; 23-5-306; 23-5-409; 23-5-612; 23-7-301; 23-7-
27 402; 30-10-1004; 37-43-204; 37-50-209; 37-54-113; 39-71-503; 41-5-2011; 42-2-105; 44-4-1101; 44-12-213;
28 44-13-102; 46-32-108; 50-1-115; 53-1-109; 53-6-148; 53-9-113; 53-24-108; 53-24-206; 60-5-530; 60-11-115;

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1 61-3-321; 61-3-415; 67-1-309; 69-3-870; 69-4-527; 75-1-1101; 75-5-1108; 75-6-214; 75-11-313; 75-26-308; 76-
2 13-150; 76-13-151; 76-13-417; 76-17-103; 77-1-108; 77-2-362; 80-2-222; 80-4-416; 80-11-518; 80-11-1006;
3 81-1-112; 81-1-113; 81-7-106; 81-7-123; 81-10-103; 82-11-161; 85-2-526; 85-20-1504; 85-20-1505; [85-25-
4 102]; 87-1-603; 87-5-909; 90-1-115; 90-1-205; 90-1-504; 90-6-331; and 90-9-306.

5 (4) There is a statutory appropriation to pay the principal, interest, premiums, and any costs of or
6 fees associated with issuing, paying, and securing, redeeming, or defeasing all bonds, notes, or other
7 obligations, as due in the ordinary course or when earlier called for redemption or defeased, that have been
8 authorized and issued pursuant to the laws of Montana. Agencies that have entered into agreements
9 authorized by the laws of Montana to pay the state treasurer, for deposit in accordance with 17-2-101 through
10 17-2-107, as determined by the state treasurer, an amount sufficient to pay the principal and interest as due on
11 the bonds or notes have statutory appropriation authority for the payments. (In subsection (3): pursuant to sec.
12 10, Ch. 360, L. 1999, the inclusion of 19-20-604 terminates contingently when the amortization period for the
13 teachers' retirement system's unfunded liability is 10 years or less; pursuant to sec. 73, Ch. 44, L. 2007, the
14 inclusion of 19-6-410 terminates contingently upon the death of the last recipient eligible under 19-6-709(2) for
15 the supplemental benefit provided by 19-6-709; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 383, L. 2015, the inclusion of 85-25-102
16 is effective on occurrence of contingency; pursuant to sec. 6, Ch. 423, L. 2015, the inclusion of 22-3-116 and
17 22-3-117 terminates June 30, 2025; pursuant to sec. 12, Ch. 55, L. 2017, the inclusion of 37-54-113 terminates
18 June 30, 2023; pursuant to sec. 4, Ch. 122, L. 2017, the inclusion of 10-3-1304 terminates September 30,
19 2025; pursuant to sec. 1, Ch. 213, L. 2017, the inclusion of 90-6-331 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to
20 secs. 5, 8, Ch. 284, L. 2017, the inclusion of 81-1-112, 81-1-113, and 81-7-106 terminates June 30, 2023;
21 pursuant to sec. 1, Ch. 340, L. 2017, the inclusion of 22-1-327 terminates July 1, 2023; pursuant to sec. 10, Ch.
22 374, L. 2017, the inclusion of 76-17-103 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 50, L. 2019, the
23 inclusion of 37-50-209 terminates September 30, 2023; pursuant to sec. 1, Ch. 408, L. 2019, the inclusion of
24 17-7-215 terminates June 30, 2029; pursuant to secs. 11, 12, and 14, Ch. 343, L. 2019, the inclusion of 15-35-
25 108 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 7, Ch. 465, L. 2019, the inclusion of 85-2-526 terminates July 1,
26 2023; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 477, L. 2019, the inclusion of 10-3-802 terminates June 30, 2023; pursuant to
27 secs. 1, 2, 3, Ch. 139, L. 2021, the inclusion of 53-9-113 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 8, Ch. 200,
28 L. 2021, the inclusion of 10-4-310 terminates July 1, 2031; pursuant to secs. 3, 4, Ch. 404, L. 2021, the

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inclusion of 30-10-1004 terminates June 30, 2027; pursuant to sec. 5, Ch. 548, L. 2021, the inclusion of 50-1-115 terminates June 30, 2025; pursuant to secs. 5 and 12, Ch. 563, L. 2021, the inclusion of 22-3-1004 is effective July 1, 2027; and pursuant to sec. 15, Ch. 574, L. 2021, the inclusion of 46-32-108 terminates June 30, 2023.)"

Section 4. Section 44-4-1607, MCA, is amended to read:

"44-4-1607. Statewide public safety communications system account. (1) There is an account in the state special revenue fund established in 17-2-102 to be known as the statewide public safety communications system account.

(2) There must be deposited in the account:

(a) money received from legislative allocations and general fund transfers;

(b) a transfer of money from a state or local agency for the purposes of this part;

(c) rates, charges, or fees collected by the department in accordance with 44-4-1606(3)(h);

(d) funds accepted in accordance with 44-4-1606(3)(i) and (3)(j); and

(e) a gift, donation, grant, legacy, bequest, or devise made for the purposes of this part.

(3) There is an account in the federal special revenue fund established in 17-2-102 to be known as the statewide public safety communications system account. There must be deposited in the account money received from the federal government for the purposes of this part.

(4) For each fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, ~~2029~~ 2023, there is transferred \$3.75 million from the state general fund to the state special revenue account provided for in this section.

(5) Funds in either account created in this section must be used by the department for the purposes of this part."

NEW SECTION. Section 5. Transfer of funds. (1) By June 30, 2023, the state treasurer shall transfer \$150 million from the general fund to the account provided for in [section 1].

(2) By June 30, 2023, the state treasurer shall transfer ~~\$35~~ \$18.6 million from the general fund to the statewide public safety communications system account provided for in 44-4-1607.

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1 (3) By June 30, 2027, the state treasurer shall transfer any unobligated funds in the account

2 established in [section1] as follows:

3 (a) 50% to the capital developments long-range building program account established in 17-7-209;

4 and

5 (b) 50% to the general fund.

6

7 **NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction.** [Section 1] is intended to be codified as an

8 integral part of Title 17, chapter 6, and the provisions of Title 17, chapter 6, apply to [section 1].

9

10 **NEW SECTION. Section 7. Severability.** If a part of [this act] is invalid, all valid parts that are
11 severable from the invalid part remain in effect. If a part of [this act] is invalid in one or more of its applications,
12 the part remains in effect in all valid applications that are severable from the invalid applications.

13

14 **NEW SECTION. Section 8. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.

15

16 **NEW SECTION. Section 9. Retroactive applicability.** [This act] applies retroactively, within the
17 meaning of 1-2-109, to funds collected pursuant to 17-6-202(2) on or after July 1, 2022.

18 - END -