

Resolution #2018-4

LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION

BACKGROUND

Cities and towns have worked many years to protect Montana's land and water resources through wise community development policies that emphasize centralized water and wastewater systems, efficient delivery of services to concentrated populations, and compliance with fair and affordable environmental standards. Now, most new development in Montana is sprawling beyond municipal boundaries, threatening our legacy of open space and clean water. At the same time, housing costs are rapidly rising due to a number of different factors, including the growth of second homes, the rising cost of labor and materials, and a lack of supply of affordable housing units. Municipalities are dedicated to working with state and federal agencies to establish growth and land use policies that recognize property rights while preserving the natural assets of Montana.

ACTION

MLCT will support bills to:

1. Encourage the use of community water, wastewater, and stormwater systems to protect environmental quality and assure that cities and towns are not obligated for a disproportionate share of the cost of complying with Numeric Nutrient Standards, MS4, and other state or federal regulatory standards.
2. Promote environmentally responsible energy development and conservation through grants, loans, and technical assistance and education programs.
3. Allow cities and towns authority under the energy and building codes to promote conservation.
4. Expand authority of cities and towns to use tax increment districts and tax abatements for opportunities as part of an effective economic development strategy.
5. Encourage and finance the development of affordable housing while maintaining local authority for land use decision-making.

MLCT will oppose bills to:

1. Restrict the annexation, zoning, planning, and subdivision review authority of cities and towns or limit local control of community development practices.
2. Restrict the use of Special Districts but will consider measures to simplify protest procedures for property owners.
3. Limit the effectiveness of the options under the tax increment district statutes.

September 6, 2018