

Resolution #2018-5

INVEST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

BACKGROUND

Montana has experienced significant growth impacts related to infrastructure and affecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of Montana's communities. Most Montanans welcome the economic opportunities connected to development, but some Montana municipalities that have had no or slow growth in the past do not have the resources and support necessary to proactively plan for and address the infrastructure and public health, safety, and general welfare of the growing population. Also, the infrastructure belonging to Montana municipalities, water and wastewater systems, streets and public facilities, is aging and in many cases has outlived its useful and functional life. For Montana cities and towns to attract healthy, responsible economic growth, the ability to provide quality essential services means the infrastructure should be in good condition and using modern technology.

The MLCT has joined the Montana Infrastructure Coalition ("MIC") and will work with the MIC to establish infrastructure priorities on a multi-session approach. We need to work to change the structure of the way infrastructure financing occurs in Montana on into the future.

In 2015 and 2017, bipartisan bills to provide funding for state-wide infrastructure, including municipalities, narrowly failed passage. These infrastructure bills would have funded local projects through grants and loans as well as university buildings and other state projects. Much of the public infrastructure, whether owned by the state or local governments, suffers from deferred maintenance and every year worsens the deterioration of the infrastructure. An infrastructure grant or loan program or other financial support for local infrastructure will provide Montana communities with additional resources and support to help plan and address needed infrastructure expansion and replacement and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of municipal residents.

ACTION

MLCT will support and promote policies for investing in local governmental infrastructure, including new or increased financing options, grant and loan programs, and other resources and support necessary to proactively plan for and address infrastructure and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of municipal residents.