

## **Resolution #2020-1**

### **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The cities and towns of Montana provide for safe and healthy communities with clean water, a sanitary environment, police and fire protection, transportation, and recreational opportunities. Our unique, vibrant municipalities provide an inviting environment that fosters the primary basis for all sectors of the Montana economy. To provide quality, cost-effective municipal services to their residents and visitors, municipalities must wisely and efficiently use their limited financial resources. At no time are these services more important than during the ongoing global COVID-19 crisis.

Local governments are closest to the people, and as such, deserve respect and support from both the state and federal levels of government for local processes, authority, and decision-making. The Montana League of Cities and Towns is committed to preserving and promoting Montana municipalities, the services they provide, and the economies they support.

#### **ACTION**

For the 2021 Legislative Session, the League will stand by the following principles of fair, affordable, and effective local government:

1. Preservation of an equitable property taxation system, the entitlement share payment to municipalities, and other existing sources of revenue to municipalities, while pursuing authority for municipalities to seek and develop new sources of revenue to fund essential local services.
2. Promote improvements to and diversification of the current local government finance structure, including but not limited to special districts, particularly to develop supplements and alternatives to property tax revenue.
3. Encourage the maintenance of, expansion of, and improvements to state grant, loan, and investment programs to fund infrastructure capital improvements to supplement the use of local funds.
4. Advocate that new legal mandates imposed upon municipalities have an identified source of independent funding and are not an unfunded mandate imposed upon municipalities.
5. Effective planning and development statutes, regulations, and policies that encourage managed growth of municipalities for the promotion of the more efficient and cost-effective delivery of clean water, treatment and disposal of wastewater and solid waste, protection of municipal water rights, interconnectivity of transportation systems, enhanced fire, police and public safety protection, improved recreation opportunities, and other municipal services.
6. Opposition to any measure that limits or diminishes municipal authority as provided by the letter and spirit of the Local Government Article of the 1972 Montana Constitution.

7. Recognition of the contribution of cities and towns to the history and culture of our state and a better understanding of the fact that all public policy should begin and end with those special places a majority of Montanans call home.
8. Strategically sponsor and support legislation or policies that maintain and strengthen local control and authority and oppose legislation or policies that seek to undermine or weaken local control and authority.
9. Support or sponsor legislation, policies, and funding that improve the ability of local governments to provide public access to their deliberations, decision-making, and records.