

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 3

Introduced by Gage

1/02	Introduced
1/03	Referred to Local Government
1/06	First Reading
1/15	Hearing
1/23	Committee Report--Bill Passed
1/24	2nd Reading Passed
1/25	3rd Reading Passed
	Transmitted to House
1/26	First Reading
1/26	Referred to Local Government
3/11	Hearing
3/13	Tabled in Committee

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

2 INTRODUCED BY GAGE

3
4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF
5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN
6 INTERIM STUDY OF COUNTY CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION AND
7 CONSOLIDATION OF COUNTY OFFICES WITHIN A COUNTY AND BETWEEN
8 COUNTIES; AND REQUIRING A REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE
9 STUDY TO THE 53RD LEGISLATURE.

10
11 WHEREAS, Montana recognizes the economic reality of
12 limited financial resources within the state; and

13 WHEREAS, the citizens and taxpayers of Montana are
14 supporting more county governments than are needed for
15 efficient management of local affairs; and

16 WHEREAS, 28 Montana counties were formed between 1910
17 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

18 WHEREAS, Article XI, section 3, of the Montana
19 Constitution allows a county government to have as many as
20 13 elected officials; and

21 WHEREAS, many sparsely populated counties do not require
22 the number of elective positions allowed by the constitution
23 to maintain an adequate level of services; and

24 WHEREAS, many counties lack the revenue to adequately
25 fund the number of county offices currently being

1 maintained; and

2 WHEREAS, the Legislature is uniquely qualified to
3 address the questions of county consolidation and county
4 office consolidation from a statewide perspective and to
5 determine what factors should be considered in developing a
6 statewide plan for consolidation and reorganization.

7
8 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE
9 OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

10 That an appropriate interim committee be assigned to
11 study:

12 (1) the consolidation and reorganization of counties,
13 taking into consideration the following factors:

- 14 (a) existing county boundaries;
15 (b) existing legislative districts;
16 (c) geographic features;
17 (d) transportation routes and market areas;
18 (e) social, economic, and natural resources;
19 (f) population distribution;
20 (g) taxable valuation; and
21 (h) other relevant factors; and

22 (2) the consolidation of county offices within and
23 between counties, taking into consideration the following
24 factors:

- 25 (a) current duties of county officers;

- 1 (b) statutory duties of county officers;
- 2 (c) qualifications for various county officers;
- 3 (d) existing level of services within counties;
- 4 (e) financial support necessary to operate current
- 5 offices;
- 6 (f) available telecommunications technology; and
- 7 (g) other relevant factors.
- 8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the interim committee
- 9 report the findings of the study to the 53rd Legislature and
- 10 present options for legislative consideration if the
- 11 committee determines that options are necessary.

-End-

APPROVED BY COMM.
ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF COUNTY CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF COUNTY OFFICES WITHIN A COUNTY AND BETWEEN COUNTIES; AND REQUIRING A REPORT OF THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY TO THE 53RD LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana recognizes the economic reality of limited financial resources within the state; and

WHEREAS, the citizens and taxpayers of Montana are supporting more county governments than are needed for efficient management of local affairs; and

WHEREAS, 28 Montana counties were formed between 1910 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, Article XI, section 3, of the Montana Constitution allows a county government to have as many as 13 elected officials; and

WHEREAS, many sparsely populated counties do not require the number of elective positions allowed by the constitution to maintain an adequate level of services; and

WHEREAS, many counties lack the revenue to adequately fund the number of county offices currently being

maintained; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature is uniquely qualified to address the questions of county consolidation and county office consolidation from a statewide perspective and to determine what factors should be considered in developing a statewide plan for consolidation and reorganization.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That an appropriate interim committee be assigned to study:

(1) the consolidation and reorganization of counties, taking into consideration the following factors:

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- (b) existing legislative districts;
- (c) geographic features;
- (d) transportation routes and market areas;
- (e) social, economic, and natural resources;
- (f) population distribution;
- (g) taxable valuation; and
- (h) other relevant factors; and

(2) the consolidation of county offices within and between counties, taking into consideration the following factors:

- (a) current duties of county officers;



- 1 (b) statutory duties of county officers;
2 (c) qualifications for various county officers;
3 (d) existing level of services within counties;
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5 offices;
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