

## **2015 Legislative Summary Related to State-Tribal Relations**

The 2015 Legislature enacted a number of bills related to state-tribal relations. This summary provides an overview of major legislation and budget provisions of House Bill 2 in the following areas:

Corrections	Education	Social programs
Culture	Infrastructure	Water
Economic Development	Government relations	Wildlife

### **Corrections**

**SB 224** requires that two members of the Commission on Sentencing tasked with studying criminal sentencing practices and policies be enrolled members of a state-recognized or federally-recognized Indian tribe.

### **Culture**

**HB 559** revises the Montana Indian Language Preservation Program, revises performance and output standards, allows tribal governments or their designees to administer local programs, removes the requirement for local program advisory boards, requires the local programs to report to the State-Tribal Economic Development Commission, and requires the Commission to report to the legislature. HB 559 also appropriates \$1.5 million for the biennium and extends the program's termination date to June 30, 2017.

**SB 272** enacts the Cultural Integrity Commitment Act, encourages school districts to create Indian language immersion programs, provides a funding formula, and provides a one-time-only biennial appropriation of \$45,000.

### **Economic Development**

**HB 2** appropriates \$1.6 million in general fund money this biennium to the Indian Country Economic Development Program (ICED), which awards grants to tribal governments to support business enterprises that produce positive economic benefits for the Tribe(s).

**HB 2** appropriates \$500,000 from the Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund this biennium to the Native American Gap Financing Revolving Loan Program, which is designed to address the lack of capital for Native American-owned businesses.

## Education

**HB 27** increases funding for K-12 education, including increases in the total American Indian achievement gap payment and the total Indian Education for All payment.

**HB 196** clarifies that reimbursements to tribally controlled community colleges are for services provided to resident, nonbeneficiary students. The reimbursement rate also increases to \$3,280 from \$3,024.

**SB 272** enacts the Cultural Integrity Commitment Act, encourages school districts to create Indian language immersion programs, provides a funding formula, and provides a one-time-only biennial appropriation of \$45,000.

## Infrastructure

**HB 2** provides \$300,000 in state special revenue over the biennium to help the St. Mary Rehabilitation Work Group implement its work plan adopted last year.

**HB 6** provides \$367,500 in total appropriations to the Crow and Fort Peck Tribes for wastewater treatment and irrigation projects.

**HB 8** reauthorized \$6,000,000 in loan authority for the Dry Prairie Regional Water Authority and \$10,000,000 for the North Central Regional Water Authority.

**HB 11** provides a \$750,000 grant from the Treasure State Endowment State Special Revenue Account to the Crow Tribe for wastewater projects.

## Government relations

**HB 187** allows a board of county commissioners to adopt regulations for unincorporated areas within a county governing the naming of roads and the assignment of numerical physical addresses except for roads under the jurisdiction of a federal, state, or tribal entity if that entity objects to the naming or assignment.

**HB 331** revises signage and geographical designation laws and requires state landholding and land management agencies to remove the words "half-breed" or "breed" from maps, signs, or markers. Requires a member of the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe to be appointed to the advisory group that develops replacement names.

**HJ 15** urges the federal government to restore federal recognition of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana.

**SB 306** updates and revises notarial laws and provides reciprocity with notarial acts in other jurisdictions, including federally recognized Indian tribes.

**SB 307** revises recognition of foreign business entities to include entities formed under laws of a federally recognized Indian tribe.

### **Social programs**

**HB 2** appropriates \$250,000 in general fund money to suicide prevention grants to be used on the reservations in Montana.

**SB 150** increases the amount of the universal system benefit funds used by a public utility for low-income energy and weatherization assistance and allows that internal programs and activities for which the utility receives credit toward the USB requirement may include providing assistance on Indian reservations.

**SB 180** allocates revenue from the rental car sales and use tax to the senior citizen and persons with disabilities transportation services account and adds tribal governments to the list of entities to which funds may be disbursed.

### **Water**

**SB 262** implements the CSKT water rights settlement.

### **Wildlife**

**SB 261** requires the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team to consult with tribal governments, among others, when reviewing sage grouse program grant applications.