

April 28, 2007

The Honorable Brad Johnson  
Secretary of State  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Secretary Johnson:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill (HB) 522, **“AN ACT REVISING THE LAWS GOVERNING THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET; REVISING THE DEFINITIONS OF “NEW PROPOSALS” AND “PRESENT LAW BASE”; REQUIRING CITATIONS FOR ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PRESENT LAW BASE; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 17-7-102 AND 17-7-123, MCA.”**

HB 522, sponsored by Rep. Sinrud, revises the laws governing the executive budget. The bill amends some statutory definitions and requires the executive budget to provide “the statutory citation that provides the legal mandate” for any proposed adjustment to the present law base. It is this latter provision which I find unnecessary, time-consuming, and of insufficient benefit to the legislative review process to warrant the bill.

The executive budget, and the legislative review process of it, are thorough, detailed, and comprehensive. Under current law, if the executive branch were to submit a decision package that was outside an agency’s mission or legal authority absent a corresponding legislative request, the legislative fiscal analysts would be fully capable of highlighting that fact.

However, my real objection to HB 522 is that it presumes the executive budget I submitted to the Legislature was in some technical manner insufficient. Ironically, HB 522 was sponsored by the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, who led that Committee into dismantling the executive budget into six pieces. Ironically, too, the Legislature adjourned yesterday because the House Republican majority refused to even place those pieces on second reading for consideration by the full body. Frankly, I find HB 522 insulting in its implication that somehow it is the executive budget process that needs improvement.

I urge the Legislature to sustain my veto.

Sincerely,

BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR

cc: Legislative Services Division