

Resolution #2026-8

SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

BACKGROUND

Montana cities and towns provide critical public safety services to the majority of Montana residents. Fire protection, emergency response, law enforcement, are important components of creating and maintaining thriving, prosperous communities. The League expresses its appreciation for the work of our local police officers, firefighters, emergency responders, and other public safety employees.

As municipal resources continue to be stretched across a variety of community needs, public safety services face growing shortfalls for adequate funding of personnel, equipment, and coverage. In addition, the need for public emergency medical services, including first-response and transport, is increasing and rapidly changing in a manner that places increased burden on already strained local fire departments.

ACTION

MLCT will support legislation and policies that:

1. Ensure adequate equipment, training, and funding for municipal emergency response, law enforcement, and fire protection services. In particular, the League supports an increase in training spots at the basic law enforcement academy. In the absence of such increase in training spots, the League will support bills that will allow local law enforcement to be certified to provide its own training or send recruits to other certified training facilities.
2. Ensure public safety services are funded at a level to meet local community public safety priorities, recognizing that additional financial resources are necessary to support both public safety and infrastructure that make it possible.
3. Assist and strengthen transparency, accessibility, and accountability in our communities, so long as the proposal includes the necessary funding or funding flexibility to enable municipalities to comply.
4. Allow a cost recovery model and billing options for emergency medical response services or that leverage existing federal and state funds for reimbursement of emergency medical response.
5. Support legislation that strengthens collaboration and coordination of public safety services and systems, while preserving local decision-making and avoiding cost shifts to municipalities.

MLCT will oppose legislation and policies that:

1. Undermine the efficacy, responsiveness, or accountability of public safety systems and services or require municipalities to cut funding to other public services to comply with unfunded mandates imposed by the state.
2. Reduce or impede funding to address community impacts that may result from legalization of marijuana.