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STATE OF MONTANA

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Governor Bullock Releases Budget That Builds on State's Fiscal Strength While Supporting Job Creation, Educational Opportunities, and Access to Health Care**

HELENA – Today, Governor Steve Bullock released his budget proposal for the 2017 biennium. The proposal aims to build on and maintain the state's fiscal strength, while making common sense investments that will allow the state's economy to continue to grow.

In his proposal, Bullock encourages the Legislature to follow his lead as they construct a budget for consideration, by:

1. Leaving a \$300 million ending fund balance on June 30, 2017, that will ensure that state is prepared to weather any rainy day.
2. Ensuring the state budget is structurally balanced, ensuring we are not spending more than we are taking in.
3. Making fiscally prudent and sustainable investments to benefit Montanans for generations—well beyond the tenure of any given governor or legislator.

"The budget is a reflection of the values of our state. Montanans recognize that our state is outperforming the nation, and we can continue this through responsible fiscal management and thoughtful investments in priorities like jobs, education, healthcare and infrastructure," Bullock said. "The budget proposal I've presented to the legislature today provides a steady vision for Montana's future that will ensure our state continues to thrive."

Key components of the budget proposal include:

- \$300 million in grants and bonds for infrastructure, including \$45 million in grants to Eastern Montana communities impacted by oil and gas development.
- The Healthy Montana Plan—a made-in-Montana model that accepts federal funds to expand health coverage to 70,000 working Montanans, while reducing medical costs and improving patient health and productivity.

- An apprenticeship tax credit for businesses that allow Montanans to earn while they learn valuable career skills, ensuring that the state continues to have a pipeline of highly skilled workers.
- Continues historic investments into the K-12 public education system, while freezing tuition within the Montana University System.
- Continues performance based funding measures that ensure accountability, as well as creates a voluntary, high-quality early childhood education which will be available to every Montana four-year-old.
- Makes important investments to improve the state’s mental health system by providing a continuum of care to ensure safe and effective treatment of individuals with mental illness.

Bullock noted that his budget makes these important investments without raising taxes, and while leaving cash in the bank for an unforeseen rainy day.

“From the day I took office and put the state’s checkbook online, I’ve challenged every expenditure we make and made sure that we’re running an effective government that Montanans can be proud of,” Bullock added.

Bullock’s budget proposal is available at [budget.mt.gov](http://budget.mt.gov).

Multimedia:

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