

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



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LT. GOVERNOR

TO: Kevin Gilbertson, Chief Information Officer
Executive agency directors

FROM: Governor Greg Gianforte

CC: Attorney General Austin Knudsen
Secretary of State Christi Jacobsen
State Auditor Troy Downing
Superintendent of Public Instruction Elsie Arntzen

DATE: December 16, 2022

RE: Prohibiting the Use of TikTok on State IT Infrastructure

Government's chief responsibility is keeping its citizens safe and secure. Recently, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation raised "national security concerns" about TikTok operations, warning the app is controlled by "a government that doesn't share our values, and that has a mission that's very much at odds with what's in the best interests of the United States."

TikTok, a video-sharing app owned by a Chinese company called ByteDance Ltd., harvests expansive amounts of data from its users' devices, much of which is unrelated to the app's purported objective of video sharing, and offers this information to the Chinese Communist Party.

Use of TikTok on state devices poses a significant risk to the security of our state and Montanans' sensitive data. Given these grave security concerns, effective immediately, no executive agency, board, commission, or other executive branch entity, official, or employee of the State of Montana shall download or access TikTok on government-issued devices or while connected to the state network. Additionally, any third party firms conducting business for or on behalf of the State of Montana shall not use TikTok.

This TikTok ban applies to all state-issued cell phones, laptops, tablets, desktop computers, and other devices which connect to the internet, and I direct you to take all necessary steps to block TikTok from being accessed. If TikTok is currently downloaded on any device described above, it must be immediately removed. If exceptions to enable law enforcement and essential government uses of the app are necessary, they must be reported to the Office of the Governor by agency leadership.

Together, we will defend the State of Montana and its people against threats to our security and way of life.