

**Amendment - 2nd Reading-yellow - Requested by: Susan Webber - (S) Committee of the Whole**

- 2025

69th Legislature 2025

Drafter: Casey Pallister,

SB0379.001.002

SENATE BILL NO. 379

INTRODUCED BY S. WEBBER, J. REAVIS, B. EDWARDS, J. ISALY, M. LEE, T. CROWE, B. CLOSE, S. FYANT, J. WEBER, J. SOOKTIS, M. CUNNINGHAM, W. CURDY, J. MORIGEAU, T. RUNNING WOLF, D. FERN, M. FOX, L. SMITH, J. WINDY BOY, B. CARTER, D. HAWK, D. HAYMAN, S. HOWELL, E. KERR-CARPENTER, E. STAFMAN, M. MARLER, S. DEMAROIS

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING LAWS RELATED TO CONSULTATION BETWEEN STATE AGENCIES AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS; REQUIRING STATE AGENCIES TO CREATE WRITTEN CONSULTATION POLICIES; REQUIRING STATE AGENCIES TO DESIGNATE AN EMPLOYEE AS A TRIBAL LIAISON; REVISING AGENCY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO THE GOVERNOR; DEFINING "CONSULTATION"; AND AMENDING SECTIONS 2-15-141 AND 2-15-143, MCA."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 2-15-141, MCA, is amended to read:

**"2-15-141. Definitions.** As used in 2-15-141 through 2-15-143, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Consultation" means a formal, direct, interactive, and timely process of engagement carried out by state agencies to seek, discuss, and consider the views of tribal governments and, when feasible, to seek agreement regarding state proposed actions that may affect tribal interests.

(2) "State agency" means a department, board, or commission of the executive branch of state government the department of administration, the department of agriculture, the department of commerce, the department of corrections, the department of environmental quality, the department of fish, wildlife, and parks, the department of justice, the department of labor and industry, the department of livestock, the department of military affairs, the department of natural resources and conservation, the department of public health and human services, the office of public instruction, the department of revenue, and the department of transportation.

(3) "Tribal government" means the officially recognized government of any tribe or nation.

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(3)(4) "Tribal officials" means the elected or appointed officials of a tribal government.

(4)(5) "Tribe" means an Indian tribe that is recognized by federal law or formally acknowledged by the state."

**Section 2.** Section 2-15-143, MCA, is amended to read:

**"2-15-143. ~~Training and consultation~~ Consultation and training -- duties of tribal liaison. (1)**

When establishing a government-to-government relationship with tribal governments, a state agency shall:

(a) collaborate with tribal governments in the development of policies, agreements, administrative rules, and program implementation that directly affect Indian tribes;

(b) consult with tribal governments as often as is required to address matters that have tribal implications;

(c) develop a written consultation policy in coordination with representatives of each federally recognized tribe in the state that is used by the agency for issues involving specific Indian tribes. A consultation policy must be created by January 1, 2026, and be updated as often as required to facilitate timely and meaningful consultation, but no less than biannually.

(d) provide tribal governments in the state with a copy of the agency's initial consultation policy and all subsequent updates to the policy;

(e) designate an agency employee to act as a tribal liaison who reports directly to the head of the state agency; and

(f) ensure that a tribal liaison receives regular trainings that assist in the liaison's job functions, including but not limited to the training prescribed in subsection (4).

(2) The position of tribal liaison within a state agency is responsible for:

(a) assisting the state agency in developing and implementing state and agency policies that promote effective communication and collaboration between the state agency and tribal governments;

(b) serving as a contact person with tribal governments and maintaining communication between the state agency and affected tribal governments; and

(c) coordinating training of state agency employees in government-to-government relations that