

GENERAL OFF-SYSTEM BRIDGE FUNDING UPDATE



NEW STATE FUNDING

State funding recently allocated by the legislature included in SB 536 has been allocated for repairs and replacements of off-system bridges. Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has already begun working with affected counties seeking reimbursement for eligible work and expenses associated with repairs and replacements. SB 536 included \$100 million for local infrastructure. Per statute, \$20 million will be distributed to incorporated cities and towns with a population of less than 10,000, leaving \$80 million for MDT to dedicate to off-system bridges.

The recommendations below are for the \$80 million remaining after the **\$20 million direct distribution to local governments** required by SB 536.



**\$20
MILLION**

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUNDING DISTRIBUTION:



**\$20
MILLION**



\$20 million for bridge work, prioritized by the **Strike Force*** team using the methodology for prioritization of off-system bridges. Use of this funding does not require following federal aid processes. Some of this funding will be allocated directly to the counties for urgent bridge replacement projects and to fund temporary repairs to help improve load restrictions or avoid bridge closures.



**\$50
MILLION**



\$50 million for MDT off-system bridge projects, prioritized by the **Strike Force*** team using the methodology for prioritization of off-system bridges.

- Projects using these SB 536 funds will be delivered using federal specifications, which allows MDT to leverage 80% (\$50 million buying power) of the construction costs for federal match on future bridge projects.

As matching funds for MDT discretionary grants, if necessary, including large, bundled bridge projects or similar projects.



**\$10
MILLION**



\$10 million to match federal discretionary grants led by local governments from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) for funding of off-system bridges. Use of matching funds must have MDT support, be no more than \$1 million per project and locally administered.

- This set aside will be monitored by MDT, and Montana Association of Counties (MACo), and will revert to the off-system bridge programs mentioned above with an initial deadline of June 30, 2025.

* The **Strike Force** team (team) is comprised of decision-makers from MDT and MACo, whose role is to execute a strategic plan for addressing off-system bridge needs. The team is supported by HDR Engineering and Stahly Engineering and utilizes the methodology for prioritization of off-system bridges described in the Off System Bridge Study and Implementation Plan and shown in the MDT Off System Bridges Public Dashboard (arcgis.com). For more information, visit:

GENERAL STATE FUNDING

In addition to the new state funding discussed above, Montana's roads and bridges are funded through a combination of federal (87%) and state/local (13%) funding sources. MDT receives no funding from Montana's general fund revenue. MDT dedicates a minimum of 15% of federal bridge funds for replacement or rehabilitation of off-system bridges. This funding coupled with the new IIJA funds equates to total funding of about \$92 million over the next five years.

FEDERAL FUNDING

MDT is advancing federal funding strategies for off-system bridge replacements, including federal discretionary grants. The need is massive, so a coordinated effort between MDT, MACo, and counties is critical to pursue federal discretionary grants. MDT and MACo are actively coordinating funding opportunities. The following grants have been or will be pursued.

PROTECT

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the **Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation** (PROTECT) Program to help make surface transportation more resilient to natural hazards, including climate change, sea level rise, flooding, extreme weather events, and other natural disasters through support of planning activities, resilience improvements, community resilience and evacuation routes, and at-risk coastal infrastructure. On August 18, 2023, MDT submitted a PROTECT grant on behalf of 12 counties with 14 bridges identified that met the specific grant criteria.

BIP

The **Bridge Investment Program** is a competitive, discretionary program that focuses on existing bridges to reduce the overall number of bridges in poor condition, or in fair condition at risk of falling into poor condition. The notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) has not been announced, and MDT plans to submit a grant with support of counties including off-system bridges that best meet the grant criteria as identified through the Off-System Bridge Study and Implementation Plan efforts.

RAISE

The **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity**, or RAISE Discretionary Grant program, provides a unique opportunity for the state department of transportation to invest in road, rail, transit, and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. The NOFO has not been announced for 2023, and MDT plans to submit a grant with the support of counties for off-system bridges that best meet the grant criteria.

For more information, visit www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/bridgestudy



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