

March 25, 2003

To: Montana State Library Commission
From: Karen Strege, State Librarian
Re: 2003 Legislative Report

04-05 Budget

Tomorrow, Senate Finance and Claims Committee will consider our section of the budget bill. I anticipate that the committee will make no changes in the current proposal. With the addition of \$160,000 from the coal severance tax (CST) joint account, MSL's 04-05 is about 1% over the Governor's request.

If the current proposal holds the reductions will be as follows:

Grants and programs for libraries

	2004	2005
Federation support	-79,217	-79,217
Interlibrary loan reimbursements	-127,000	-127,000
Per capita/per square mile	-12,675	-7,282

MSL operations

Two FTE	-53,162	-53,070
Materials	-44,152	-44,152
Administration	-10,081	-10,081
NRIS/Heritage	-37,500	-37,500

These reductions **do not** include the 1% reduction in all agencies' general fund, which equals approximately \$16,000 per year for MSL. I think that the Senate may remove this across-the-board cut.

Bills of interest

HB 177, which would have reduced our share of the CST by half, was tabled in Appropriations on March 12.

HB 491, which would have made TSEP funding available to fund natural resource information projects at the state library, was tabled in Appropriations on February 17.

HB 593, which would have revised coal severance tax allocations by earmarking part of the shared accounts to "Coal" counties, was tabled in Appropriations on March 26.

HB 694, which would have changed Library Records Confidentially Law, missed the transmittal deadline.

This morning, Senator Walter McNutt, the sponsor of SB 142 withdrew the bill, which would have changed the public record access law.

Representative Musgrove asked for a bill draft that would have allocated \$150,000 from the gas tax that currently funds the underground storage tax cleanup fund at the Department of Environment Quality. Mr. Musgrove has not approved the draft and it appears that the draft may not be introduced.