

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE  
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS  
LT. GOVERNOR

May 5, 2025

The Honorable Brandon Ler  
Speaker of the House  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620

The Honorable Matt Regier  
President of the Senate  
State Capitol  
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Speaker Ler and President Regier:

Over the past four years, we've made great strides in supporting the hardworking families of Montana's agriculture community who raise food for our state, nation, and world. In addition to dealing with market fluctuations, seasonal weather, and unpredictable disasters, farmers and ranchers raising crops or livestock in Montana must protect their operations from a number of plant and animal diseases, pests, and invasive species, including noxious weeds.

Noxious weeds are harmful to our state's agricultural industry by displacing native plants, increasing soil erosion, and damaging Montana's pristine pastureland. Thankfully, the Montana Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant program, with its existing \$10 million corpus, has seen great success in assisting counties, landowners, local communities, researchers, and educators to address noxious weeds across our state. Last year, the grant program helped treat close to 69,000 acres of land across the state while also advancing noxious weed education efforts.

In my budget sent to the Legislature, I proposed investing an additional \$10 million in one-time-only funding into the Noxious Weed Trust Fund. The Legislature passed this and sent it to me through Senate Bill 167.

While contributing more to the Noxious Weed Trust Fund is an appropriate policy, there is another larger issue I must consider. Our Montana Constitution requires us to balance our budget. In 2021 and 2023, I am proud that we worked together to deliver balanced budgets that not only were fiscally responsible, but also allowed us to seize the opportunity to let hardworking Montanans keep more of what they earn. The budget proposal I sent to the Legislature for the 2025 Legislative Session was fiscally conservative, keeping spending below inflation.

The budget and other bills with hefty price tags that the Legislature passed, however, are not fiscally responsible. Therefore, I will keenly review the budget and spending bills the Legislature passed, making some difficult decisions to protect taxpayers and their hard-earned resources. Hardworking Montanans expect us to be fiscally responsible.

Expanding the Noxious Weed Trust Fund was part of my budget. Given the massive volume of spending in the budget and other bills the Legislature has passed, however, I must consider cutting the responsible spending my administration proposed. We must all tighten our belts, live within our means like hardworking Montanans do, and put every piece of spending legislation on the table. Therefore, I'm vetoing Senate Bill 167 to restrain the budget and spending the Legislature sent me, though I look forward to considering other bills with mechanisms to address noxious weeds.

Therefore, in accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto Senate Bill 167: "AN ACT TRANSFERRING FUNDS TO THE NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT TRUST FUND; PROVIDING RULES FOR DEPOSIT OF INTEREST AND INCOME; AMENDING SECTION 80-7-811, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Gianforte", is written over a printed name and title.

Greg Gianforte  
Governor

Enclosure

cc: Legislative Services Division  
Christi Jacobsen, Secretary of State