



SIERRA CLUB

MONTANA CHAPTER

Oppose Attacks on Tribal Sovereignty

SB 214 would make it harder for Montana tribal nations to reclaim treaty-guaranteed land stolen in a late-19th century land allotment policy

OPPOSE SB 214 (Senator Greg Hertz)

A decade ago, a law was passed that exempted tribes from paying taxes on tribal fee lands after they had begun the application process to turn the land into tribal trust land. Fee lands are generally subject to taxes while trust lands aren't. Changing between the two is a federal application process that often takes 5 or more years to complete. This bill would amend the current law by forcing tribes to pay property taxes to counties on fee lands if the application period to turn the lands to trust lands takes longer than five years.

- Applications to turn fee lands into trust lands involve 16 steps .
- The Department of Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have to process these types of applications for 575 reservations making for a slow process.
- Most applications filed for this switch are successful.
- Tribes like the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes own large amounts of fee-land making them especially vulnerable to this bill.
- Some opponents of this bill include: Montana Women Vote, CSKT, Fort Belknap Assiniboine, and Gros Ventre Tribes, and the Montana Budget and Policy Center
- Bills like this hurt the ability of tribal nations to reclaim property stolen [in a late-19th century land allotment policy](#) that made treaty-guaranteed land available for private ownership by non-natives. It makes it more difficult to redress the painful and ongoing efforts of colonization in Montana.

See the [current bill text](#) to learn more & check out our [citizen lobbying resource](#) to get involved in our legislative work more generally. Follow [Western Native Voice](#), [Montana Budget & Policy Center](#), and [Montana Women Vote](#) for updates on this particular bill.

For more information about our legislative work, contact Caitlin Piserchia at caitlin.piserchia@sierraclub.org.