

Big Sky Resort Area District
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BIG SKY RESORT AREA DISTRICT MOVES FORWARD 1% FOR INFRASTRUCTURE VOTE

Big Sky, Montana, January 7th, 2020 – In May of 2019, Montana Senate Bill 241 (SB241) passed allowing the 10 designated resort tax communities to levy a vote on an additional 1% tax for voter approved critical infrastructure projects. Through a unanimous vote, the Board of Directors of the Big Sky Resort Area District (District) approved a resolution bringing projects to the Big Sky ballot. Growing infrastructure demands within the community prompted the District to work diligently in Helena to ensure the passage of the Bill. “We have known that Big Sky has looming infrastructure needs. I’m delighted our time and energy supporting SB241 will finally come to a vote for projects in our community. If voters approve, these projects will leave a community-wide legacy for future generations. We look forward to educating voters about these projects and the 1% leading up to the vote on May 5th.” District Board Chair Kevin Germain commented.

The Big Sky County Water and Sewer District No. 363 (BSCWSD) submitted two applications for 1% projects within the resort tax District. One project constructs a much-needed upgrade to the BSCWSD Water Resource Recovery Facility (WRRF), increasing average day rated treatment capacity from 600,000 gallons to 910,000 gallons, to support the growing population. Additionally, the BSCWSD has made a commitment (upon completion of the expansion) of 500 Single Family Equivalents to address workforce housing, a community-wide identified necessity.

The second project constructs a Lift Station near the Highway 191/64 intersection to convey wastewater from the Canyon Area to the WRRF. This includes a force main paralleling 64 and connecting the Lift Station to the WRRF. In addition, a second main will take highly treated effluent from the WRRF to dispose in ground water infiltration galleries. The project will help eliminate some Canyon Area septic drain fields as well as recharge groundwater. The net result will improve water quality, address capacity issues due to population growth, and minimize environmental impacts, most notably on the Gallatin River. The projects requested up to \$27 million and \$12 million for each respective project.

Ron Edwards General Manager of the BSCWSD added, “Analysis by a joint board sub-committee showed that approximately 60% of resort tax revenue is generated within the boundaries of BSCWSD, and approximately 60% of the registered voters of the resort tax District live within the boundaries of BSCWSD. Therefore, our funding request of \$27 million is for approximately 60% of the WRRF project costs and the pipeline project request of \$12 million pays for 100%.” Both organizations agree the projects accomplish the following strategies outlined in the Our Big Sky – Vision and Strategy Plan: *Improve and Maintain Infrastructure, Protect Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resources, Promote the Development of Affordable Housing*. “The District heard an overwhelming community desire to move forward strategies outlined in the Community Vision and Strategy Plan. It’s evident these projects not only qualify for the 1% but more importantly address multiple strategies outlined in the plan.” said District Manager Daniel Bierschwale.

The Big Sky Resort Tax is a 3% tax passed in 1992. Since its inception, the money raised has played a significant role in the funding of community services and programs including infrastructure facilities, post office services, ambulance and emergency services, public transportation systems, parks and trails, community library, tourism development, public health, safety, and welfare services within the District. For more information on Big Sky

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