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Form Montana Licensing Reform Task Force
Matter Jeffrey E. Zarycki - Rules
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Montana Licensing Reform Task Force

This Task Force was created pursuant to Executive Order 1-2026 on January 29, 2026.

Purpose of the Licensing Reform Task Force

The Task Force shall provide the Governor with recommendations and strategies for the State of Montana to reform the professional occupational licensing system for the purposes of:

- identifying and removing burdens and barriers faced by licensees that are not necessary to protect the public; and
- improving access to and availability of professional services for citizens across Montana, including rural communities.

In developing recommendations and strategies, the Task Force shall seek input from Montana citizens, legislators, Montana associations whose members are licensed occupational professionals, professional licensing boards, relevant state agencies, advisory groups and researchers focused on occupational licensing, and other appropriate stakeholders as determined by the Task Force.

Public Record

Please note that all information received through this form is public record.

Which committee would you like to receive your comment?

Full Task Force
Construction Subcommittee
Barriers Subcommittee

We want to hear from you!

We would like to receive any comments you would like the Task Force, or one of its subcommittees, to review. In addition, we are specifically looking for feedback for:

1. Specific topics a committee or the task force should consider, and
2. Specific people or organizations you think the task force should hear from.

Do you have a general comment or a specific person or topic for the Task Force to hear from?

General comment

What are your comments?

Please keep my company and name anonymous.

We are a boring (directional drilling) company that is signed with IBEW local union hall. We sometimes do union work for utilities like NorthWest Energy which requires us to be signed to the Local for their projects. However, there has not been enough work available to sustain our business. The union does not allow us to leave and pursue other competitive business opportunities without paying their negotiated wages and benefits to our employees. Unfortunately, competing non-union drilling companies are free to pay whatever they want and can pursue all other work competitively including prevailing wage jobs for city and state. Here is an example: I bid on a city prevailing wage job as an IBEW union sub contractor to a IBEW union prime contractor. The prime contractor used the non-union sub contractor because they had a lower bid. The union does not even protect its own from non-union competition. In this case signing with the union is a huge disadvantage.

The fiber optic installation and boring work in Montana is another issue. We have Federal grant funds from the BEAD program spread all across Montana to install underground fiber optic networks to businesses and homes. The program does not require any kind of prevailing wage to be paid to employees. Many out of state contractors are working these jobs using 1099 workers with no insurance or benefits. Some use workers from questionable origins. They undercut the price of local contractors. When they make a mistake and cause damage they skip town and are never heard from again. This leaves damaged underground infrastructure for repair.

Montana water well drillings licenses - This is more of a club than an industry. A licensed driller documents and signs off on the apprenticeship program for new drillers to obtain a license. This controls competition, why would a licensed driller want to apprentice a new driller and introduce potential competitors into their marketplace? Anyone that demonstrates the knowledge required for licensure should be able to obtain one. I don't see why this is any different than obtaining a CDL. All licenses in Montana should only depend on demonstrating knowledge or a education credential and fulfilling the requirements of the state, not fulfilling the requirements of a competing person.
