



2019 LEGISLATIVE VOTING REVIEW

A Snapshot of the Voting Record of Billings Area State Legislators.





2019 SESSION A SUCCESS

The 66th Legislative Session concluded on Thursday, April 25, 2019. Over the course of 87 legislative working days, our legislators engaged in the thoughtful process of amending and creating Montana law. With over 1,300 bills introduced, the Billings Chamber commends and thanks our citizen legislators for the countless hours and late nights reading, discussing, and debating Montana's future. While we might not always see eye-to-eye on certain issues or a vision for our future, the **Billings Chamber of Commerce is grateful for the sacrifice of our legislators every two years.**

We also thank our chamber members, the wonderful employers in our community that grow our economy and provide our economic prosperity. Especially those who traveled to testify, or communicated with legislators to tell your story and share your perspective. Your testimony is not only influential, but helpful as well. Legislators appreciate a first-hand understanding of the impact a bill may have on business. **Thank you to our chamber members for your efforts throughout the session.**

The 2019 Session was a success for our chamber community. Despite missing an opportunity to pass our 406 Impact Districts bill this session, there were many accomplishments to celebrate. After failing to pass the legislature in the last two sessions, a bonding bill is headed to the Governor's desk, with \$80 million of needed economic development and infrastructure projects. Medicaid expansion, which needed to be reauthorized, passed with the inclusion of work requirements and another reauthorization vote scheduled for 2025. Along with passing some good bills, we also successfully defended our businesses from harmful bills such as a substantial minimum wage increase and a proposal to establish a new carbon tax.

As a service to our members, we aim to inform you on how our legislative body voted on some of the important bills considered during this legislative session. While we can only provide a snapshot of the thousands of votes taken throughout the session, we hope you find the information useful. As you have conversations with legislators throughout the interim and during the 2020 campaign season, please refer to this scorecard as you consider your vote.

Our work is not over: the Billings Chamber of Commerce is always advocating for our members. It is our mission to ***lead the community in local, state, and federal issues impacting business and our quality of life.*** We will review the lessons learned, craft a strategy for moving forward, and continue the work that remains, building off of the progress we've made so far.

Thank you again to our membership for your engagement. We look forward to working for you.

Daniel Brooks
Business Advocacy Manager
Billings Chamber of Commerce



Scorecard Methodology

The logic of selection



1
0

// BILL SELECTION

Bills were selected with consideration for our policy issues, and an emphasis on bills with floor votes from both House and Senate. This allows you to see how legislators voted and compare their votes to the rest of our delegation.

2
0

// COMMITTEE VOTES

A few committee votes were selected as well. While those only show a few votes taken by our delegation, rather than our entire body of legislators, we think they are important issues our members should be aware of.

3
0

// FAVORING BIPARTISANSHIP

While the selected bills appear to favor Republican sponsorship, a conscious effort was made to select bills that garnered bipartisan support. Besides the chosen committee votes, all of the bills used for scoring were bipartisan.

4
0

// CALCULATING SCORES

Voting Scores were calculated by taking the number of Business Positive votes and dividing by the total number of votes. Instances where legislators were excused or absent were not factored in to the final Voting Score.

LEGISLATOR SCORECARD

Strategic Priorities

Economic Prosperity

SENATE

Chamber Position	Bill #	Sponsor (Party)	Description	Economic Development Tools			Tourism Industry Support			Public Safety			Business Climate			Education			Natural Resources			Health Care	VOTING SCORE
				👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	SB 340*	Roger Webb (R)	406 Impact Districts	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	94%	
	HB 652:	Mike Hopkins (R)	Bonding Bill	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	100%	
	HB 52:	Jim Keane (D)	Econ Dev Programs	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	69%	
	HB 293:	Wylie Galt (R)	Film Tax Credits	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	53%	
	SB 24:	Terry Gauthier (R)	Opt-out Increase for Trails	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	94%	
	SB 338:	Terry Gauthier (R)	Constructing MHC	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	94%	
	SB 147:	M. MacDonald (D)	Human Trafficking	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	63%	
	HB 190:	Bruce Grubbs (R)	Speed Limit Authority	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	94%	
	HB 749:	D. Zolnikov (R)	Human Trafficking	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	42%	
	HB 345:	Mary Dunwell (D)	Increase Minimum Wage	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	SB 266:	Mark Blasdel (R)	Business Tax Credits	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 581:	Casey Knudsen (R)	Require Timely Licensure	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 218:	Sue Vinton (R)	Career & Technical Ed	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	SB 152:	Dick Barrett (D)	6-mill Sunset Repeal	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 351:	W. McKamey (R)	Transformational Learning	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	SB 189:	Dick Barrett (D)	Establish Carbon Tax	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 286:	Alan Redfield (R)	Revise Water Right Laws	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 403:	Barry Usher (R)	Revise Coal Tax Laws	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		
	HB 658:	Ed Buttrey (R)	Medicaid Expansion	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍		

Vote Key



Business Positive



Business Negative



No Vote Taken



Excused



Absent

* - Blast Motion

LEGISLATOR SCORECARD

Strategic Priorities

Economic Prosperity

HOUSE

Bill #: Sponsor (Party) Description		Economic Development Tools			Tourism Industry Support			Public Safety			Business Climate			Education			Natural Resources			Health Care	VOTING SCORE
Chamber	Position	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍		
	SB 340*: Roger Webb (R) 406 Impact Districts																				
	HB 652: Mike Hopkins (R) Bonding Bill																				
	HB 52: Jim Keane (D) Econ Dev Programs																				
	HB 293: Wylie Galt (R) Film Tax Credits																				
	SB 24: Terry Gauthier (R) Opt-out Increase for Trails																				
	SB 338: Terry Gauthier (R) Constructing MHC																				
	SB 147: M. MacDonald (D) Human Trafficking																				
	HB 190: Bruce Grubbs (R) Speed Limit Authority																				
	HB 749: D. Zolnikov (R) Human Trafficking																				
	HB 345: Mary Dunwell (D) Increase Minimum Wage																				
	SB 266: Mark Blasdel (R) Business Tax Credits																				
	HB 581: Casey Knudsen (R) Require Timely Licensure																				
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	HB 403: Barry Usher (R) Revise Coal Tax Laws																				
	HB 658: Ed Buttrey (R) Medicaid Expansion																				
Custer		NV	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	100%	
Usher		NV	👎	👎	👍	👎	👎	👍	👎	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👎	NV	👍	👍	👎	53%
Peppers		NV	👎	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	93%
Peregoy		NV	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👎	👍	75%
Webb		NV	👎	👍	👎	👎	👎	EX	👎	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👍	👎	57%
Knudsen		NV	EX	👎	👍	👎	👍	👍	👎	👍	NV	👍	EX	EX	NV	EX	NV	👍	👍	👎	64%
Zolnikov		NV	👍	AB	👍	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	👎	👍	NV	👍	👎	EX	79%
Mercer		NV	👎	👎	👎	👍	👎	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👍	👎	67%
Kelker		NV	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👎	👍	93%
Karjala		NV	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	👍	NV	👎	👍	👍	NV	👍	NV	👍	👎	👍	87%

Vote
Key



Business
Positive



Business
Negative



No Vote
Taken



Excused



Absent

* - Blast
Motion

LEGISLATOR SCORECARD

Strategic Priorities

Economic Prosperity

HOUSE

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//	E. Kerr-Carpenter	NV												NV						NV					88%
//	Jade Bahr	NV									NV					NV		NV		NV					73%
//	Frank Fleming	NV									NV					NV		NV							60%
//	Rodney Garcia	NV		EX		EX					NV	EX				NV		NV		NV			EX		82%
//	Dennis Lenz	NV									NV						NV		NV						53%
//	Terry Moore	NV									NV						NV		NV						60%
//	Vince Ricci	NV															NV		NV						56%
//	Sue Vinton	NV																NV		NV					69%
//	Forrest Mandeville	NV									NV							NV		NV					60%
//	Seth Berglee	NV		EX							NV							NV		NV			EX		69%

Vote Key



Business Positive



Business Negative



No Vote Taken



Excused



Absent

* - Blast Motion

BRIEF BILL SUMMARIES

The next few pages provide additional context on the bills selected above, and how they fit into the Billings Chamber priority sections. Please refer to the key on the right as you read through the bills.

// SECTION HEADER

Color-coded to scorecard section

Red = Republican

Blue = Democrat

HB = House Bill

SB = Senate Bill

BILL #

Bill Sponsor

Bill Name

Thumbs Up

Checkmark

Chamber Position

Up = Support

Down = Oppose

Bill Result

Check = Passed

"x" = Failed

Each bill has a summary section describing what the bill does and why it is important.

// ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

SB 340

Roger Webb

406 Impact Districts

Thumbs Up

X

The 406 Impact District bill would have enabled the creation of impact districts in Montana communities that approved a plan for civic infrastructure development and committed \$300 million of new private investment in the district. SB 340 was an integral component to the One Big Sky District plan in Billings, a priority for our leading community organizations. The scoring for this bill is on the Senate blast motion.

HB 652

Mike Hopkins

Bonding bill

Thumbs Up

Checkmark

Providing \$80 million of funding for infrastructure and economic development, the bill needed a 2/3 majority to clear both House and Senate. In the bill is \$16 million for Romney Hall, \$9.6 million for 26 water and wastewater projects, \$3 million for seven bridge projects, and \$1.3 million for a water line at Makoshika Park campground, among many other projects. Passage of the bonding bill will help address our numerous critical infrastructure needs in Montana.

HB 52

Jim Keane

Economic development programs

Thumbs Up

Checkmark

A group of economic development programs was due for reauthorization this session. These programs include: Growth through Agriculture; Small Business Development Center; Certified Regional Development Corporations; and the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center. Amendments to the bill stripped Research and Commercialization funding and set a new sunset for reconsideration in 2027. Coal Severance Tax interest funds these critical programs.

// TOURISM INDUSTRY SUPPORT

HB 293

Wylie Galt

Film tax credits



Provides a tax credit for film production companies for 20% of expenditures and a post-production tax credit for 25% of qualified wages incurred in the state of Montana. The intent is similar to the expired Big Sky on the Big Screen Act, which aimed to incentivize production companies to choose Montana when deciding where to film movies and television shows. Attracting media production highlights our state and provides employment during the process.

SB 24

Terry Gauthier

Opt-out increase for trail development

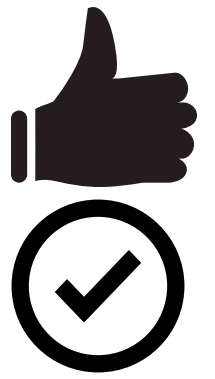


There is an optional light vehicle registration fee that funds state parks, fishing access sites, and the operation of state-owned facilities. The bill raises the optional fee from \$6 to \$9 and takes some of the additional funds to be used towards a grant program for funding trails and recreational facilities. Revenue raised is expected to be around \$2,000,000 per year, starting in FY 2021. With federal trail funding diminishing, new sources are necessary to build our trail systems.

SB 338

Terry Gauthier

Construct MHC and museum grants



Establishes the Montana Museums Act and increases the lodging tax by 1% to pay for the construction of the Montana Historical Center. By FY 2021 the increased funding is expected to reach \$9.3 million. In 2025, when MHC is completed, the additional 1% is reallocated and partially goes toward tourism partner marketing and promotion for Montana. Additionally, the bill directs the Dept. of Commerce to allocate \$400,000 to the Moss Mansion for repair and maintenance.

// PUBLIC SAFETY

SB 147

M. MacDonald

Human trafficking



The bill clarifies some definitions, including what constitutes prostitution. It also adds protections for victims of human trafficking and aggravating penalties to offenders who pay for intercourse or sexual contact when the sex worker is a human trafficking victim. Prior to passage of SB 147, it was legal in Montana to patron a sex worker for sexual contact that did not include penetration. Meaning, certain acts of prostitution were legal in Montana. The bill passed almost unanimously.

HB 190

Bruce Grubbs

Authority to set school zone speed limits

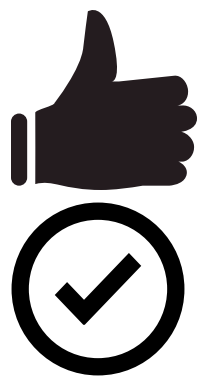


Prior to passage of HB 190, Montana law forbade a local authority to reduce speeds around a school or senior center lower than 80% of the posted speed limit. For instance, if a school is built on a road with a 45 mph speed limit, the school zone limit could be set no lower than 35 mph--far too fast when school children are present. The bill omits the 80% specification and now prohibits school zone speed limits from being reduced to "less than 15 miles an hour."

HB 749

Daniel Zolnikov

Human trafficking



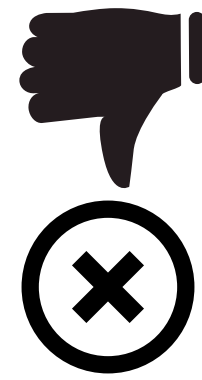
In conjunction with SB 147, this bill helps to counter the problem of human trafficking by doing three things. First, it requires massage therapy businesses to display massage licenses for each of the therapists working at the business. Second, it allows law enforcement or a designated official to inspect the business to ensure compliance with the first requirement. Lastly, it creates a two-person human trafficking enforcement team at Dept. of Justice.

// BUSINESS CLIMATE

HB 345

Mary Dunwell

Significant minimum wage increase



Proposed an incremental increase of the Montana minimum wage from its current \$8.50 per hour to an eventual \$15 per hour, an increase of \$6.50 per hour. Nearly doubling the current minimum wage rate, we would expect to see fewer employers hiring and conversely fewer people being hired. Such a substantial increase would chill economic growth and be harmful to both businesses and the unskilled workforce seeking employment. This scoring was on the motion to table.

SB 266

Mark Blasdel

Business tax credit

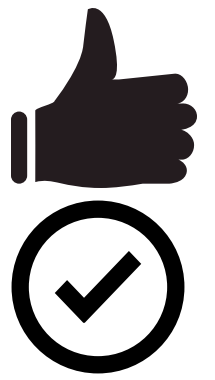


A payroll tax credit for qualified new employees. An employer can apply for a tax credit certificate by showing qualifying net job growth at more than 10 employees within the first year and at least 15 in subsequent years. New employees must be employed 6 months, earn at least \$45k plus benefits, and not have been previously employed or replacing an employee. The bill provides significant business investment incentive and job creation.

HB 581

Casey Knudsen

Require timely licensure



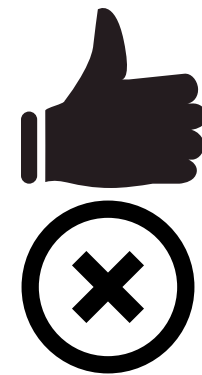
Mandates timely licensure by professional and occupational boards. In issuing routine licenses for a board, the department shall issue a license within 45 days from the time of receiving a completed application or, within 10 calendar days, provide notice and response timelines to the applicant of deficiencies in the application or provide information as to any exigent circumstances that may delay issuing a license.

// EDUCATION

HB 218

Sue Vinton

Career & technical education

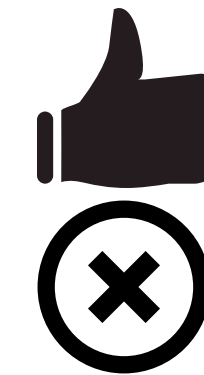


Co-sponsored by 11 Billings-area legislators, the bill would have appropriated \$1.85 million each year of the biennium for Career & Technical Education. \$1 million would go to eligible programs in grades 9 - 12 and up to \$850,000 must be spent on eligible programs in grades 6 - 8. Montana is far behind its neighboring states in funding CTE programs. This bill would have provided around \$40 per student, far short of ID (~\$600), ND (~\$400), and SD (~\$230).

SB 152

Dick Barrett

Repeal sunset on 6-mill education levy

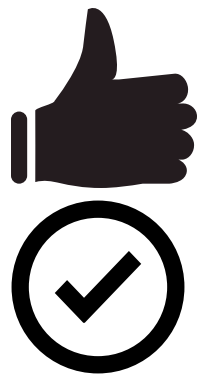


The 6-mill education levy has been on the ballot and reauthorized every 10 years, including last election, since it was passed in 1948. It is estimated to raise around \$21 million each year of the upcoming biennium to go towards educational programs in the Montana University System. The bill, co-sponsored by a bipartisan group of 6 Billings-area legislators, would eliminate the ongoing 10-year reauthorization, making the 6-mill levy permanent.

HB 351

W. McKamey

Transformational learning



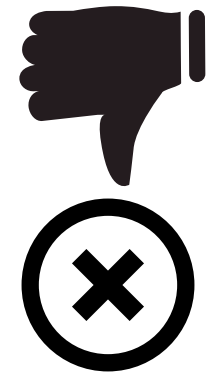
As another innovative solution to developing our workforce, transformational learning is a flexible system of pupil-centered learning designed to develop the full educational potential of each student. It allows students to focus on nontraditional or trade careers. School boards interested in developing a program apply to the Board of Public Education, which will review and approve programs until the appropriated \$2.6 million is exhausted.

// NATURAL RESOURCES

SB 189

Dick Barrett

Establish a carbon tax



Proposed a \$10 per ton tax on carbon dioxide equivalent emissions on large emissions sources. It would distribute revenue to the residents of Montana through an income tax credit worth \$120-\$140. Because of Montana's minute carbon dioxide emissions, relative to the world, this bill is more of a political statement than a practical solution. It would have put our businesses at a competitive disadvantage without moving the needle on addressing climate change issues.

HB 286

Alan Redfield

Revise water rights

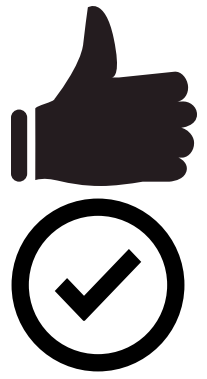


Bill declares that a well or developed spring whose diversion works is located on private land for use on state land in connection with a state land lease does not result in an ownership interest in the state of Montana. The bill clarifies that the state of Montana can only assert an ownership interest if the well or developed spring is located on trust land, put to use on trust land, and the state has exclusive rights in the groundwater development works. This bill strengthens water rights.

HB 403

Barry Usher

Revise coal tax laws



Removes the 10 year sunset date on the reduced tax rate of 2.5% on coal gross proceeds from a new underground coal mine. It also extends by 10 years the reduced tax rate of 2.5% on proceeds from existing underground coal mines. The continued abatement helps our energy industry by providing certainty in the tax structure, our state by keeping taxes from coal revenue flowing to pay for infrastructure, and our communities that prosper from energy jobs.

// HEALTHCARE

HB 658

Ed Buttrey

Medicaid expansion



Continues, through 2025, the Montana Medicaid Expansion program, providing healthcare coverage for low income Montanans. The bill adds an asset test to ensure people with significant property assets do not benefit from the program, and a community engagement requirement for some who utilize the benefits to report their work or volunteer. Medicaid expansion provides numerous benefits (highlighted below) to Montana, and reauthorizing the program will continue to benefit our state, our businesses, and our citizens.

- \$350-\$400 million of new spending in MT
- 5,000 jobs generated
- Reduces crime
- Improves health
- Lowers debt

Now What?

The next steps you can take.



01

// EMAIL LEGISLATORS

Use our VoterVoice system to find out who represents you, from President all the way down to your local City Council members. Then email legislators by selecting them and composing your message; it is automatically formatted and sent to their email address. Just goto: billingschamber.com/action-center

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815 S 27th St

59101



Your State Officials

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- ☐  [Lt. Governor Mike Cooney](#) (D-MT)
- ☐  [Secretary of State Corey Stapleton](#) (R-MT)
- ☐  [Attorney General Tim Fox](#) (R-MT)
- ☒  [Senator Jen Gross](#) (D-MT-025)
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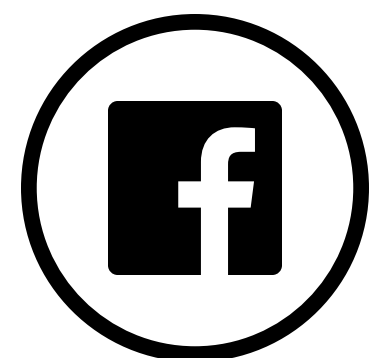


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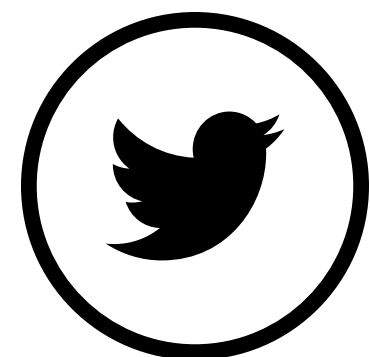
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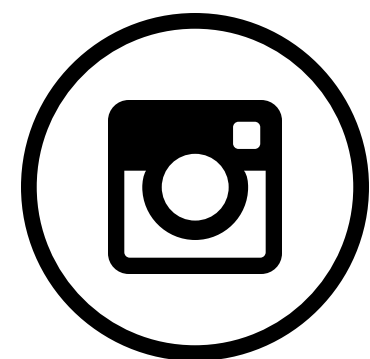
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