



Butte



Montana Department of Commerce

Montana Ireland Trade Commission Annual Report

August 2026

INTRODUCTION

During the 2025 legislative session, the Montana legislature passed [SB 320](#): Create Montana-Ireland trade commission. This bill allocated MITC to Commerce for administrative purposes beginning July 1, 2025.

The commission consists of 9 members, including four appointed by legislative leadership, 2 appointed by the Governor and three agency directors or their designees.

Per section 7 of the bill, on or before September 1 of each year, MITC shall provide a report to the governor and the legislature on:

- a description of the commission's work, including how often the commission met during the preceding 12 months and the minutes of the commission's meetings;
- a description of benefits to the state and to sectors involved in international trade, attributable to the commission's efforts;
- recommendations for legislative action that would support trade between the state and Ireland;
- a summary of anticipated commission activities in the ensuing year, including any recommendations or requests that may assist the commission's work.

ANNUAL REPORT

Commission's work and meeting minutes

Over the past year, MITC has met four times:

- September 18, 2025
- December 1, 2025
- March 12, 2026
- April 22, 2026

In September 2025, the Commission discussed goal setting, the Failte Montana Irish Festival and received presentations on trade mission planning, including costs, time, resources and more, as well as MITC financial report.

In December 2025, the Commission received reports and information from Chairman Cuffe, additional commissioner reports, from the National Trade Commission meeting and information from the University of Montana Irish Studies Program and a financial report on MITC financials. In this meeting, it was discussed about moving the Commission to be a non-profit entity instead of attached to Commerce in order to allow more freedom for their use of funds and to reduce the administrative burden on Commerce to manage, host and staff MITC meetings. This entity would be a separate but similar group to the existing Commission

In March 2026, the Commission received reports from the UM Irish Studies Program, the MSU Engineering Department trip to Ireland, from Commerce on meetings with the Consulate in San Francisco, updates from Chairman Cuffe and other Commissioners and reviewed their financials. It was also discussed about creating a new non-profit entity again. No vote was ultimately held on this action item.

In April 2026, the Commission again discussed the UM Irish Studies program and discussed moving to a non-profit model. They also reviewed MITC financials. At this meeting Commerce requested holding on scheduling future meetings until such a time that the non-profit documents were ready to be voted on. This was requested due to the administrative costs for meetings held since July 2025 far outpacing the fundraised dollars for the MITC account.

Future meeting dates and meeting minutes, including meeting recordings, can be found at the [Montana Ireland Trade Commission website](#).

Benefits to the state

MITC's benefits to the state are outlined in SB 320 and include:

- Advancing bilateral trade and investment between Montana and Ireland;
- Initiating joint action on issues of mutual interest to Montana and Ireland;
- Promoting business and academic exchanges between Montana and Ireland;
- Encouraging mutual economic support between Montana and Ireland;
- Encouraging mutual investment in the infrastructure of Montana and Ireland;
- and
- Addressing any other issues deemed to be of mutual benefit to Montana and Ireland.

The Commission will continue to collaborate with Commerce, and future reports to the legislature will demonstrate how MITC's work aligns with the stated objectives and metrics.

Recommendations for legislative action

MITC currently has no legislative recommendations but aims to provide any recommendations prior to the 2027 session.

Summary of anticipated activities

Currently, MITC has no recommendations or requests for the Governor or legislature. If needed in the future, MITC will communicate appropriately to make such requests.

SUMMARY

MITC is interested in reviewing the current structure and looking at changes to the structure to remove administrative attachment to state government. As decisions are made by MITC, they will communicate any needs for legislative changes to the Governor and the necessary legislative interim committees.