



Butte



Montana Department of Commerce

Montana Ireland Trade Commission Annual Report

August 2025

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. All initial appointments were required to be made within 90 days of the effective date of the act and a first meeting of MITC was required to be held within 30 days of the final appointment.

The final appointment was made on August 1, 2025, and the initial meeting of MITC was held on August 15, 2025, virtually with a quorum of the commission present.

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

At the initial meeting of the commission on August 15, 2025, MITC broadly discussed the below topics:

- Election of Commission Officers
- Commission goals for the 27 biennium
- Fundraising needed to meet Commission goals

Senator Mike Cuffe was named as Chair of the Commission and Senator Ellie Boldman was named as Vice-Chair.

MITC set goals for the biennium, including hosting cultural events in-state and traveling to Ireland for similar events. They also discussed a potential trade mission to Ireland, with Commerce providing time, resources, and cost estimates at a future meeting. The Failte Montana Irish Festival in Missoula on September 5, 2025, was seen as an opportunity for MITC to attend and support the Friends of Irish Studies at the University of Montana. Additionally, MITC plans to create a banner and pins for state-wide cultural events.

MITC discussed that several commissioners have begun outreach for fundraising efforts to support MITC's goals and objectives as well as to pay for Commerce staff time to administer MITC meetings, complete financial reporting, manage the MITC website and other administrative tasks. Since the Commission is self-funded without additional FTE, Commerce staff are allowed to charge their time to the MITC fund, per the bill language. As of August 28, 2025, MITC has fundraised \$500 and Commerce staff have put in 68.5 hours of time to welcome Commissioners, create and update the MITC website, plan, organize and staff the initial meeting and prepare information as requested by the commission.

MITC further planned their next meeting to be Thursday, September 18, 2025, at the Montana State Capitol. Further discussion of MITC goals and fundraising will occur at this meeting. Commerce offered to present on trade mission logistics. After the meeting,

Chair Cuffe requested that Commerce provide specifics on the costs for administrative support based on staff hours, hourly rates and benefits.

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 them in the September 2026 report based on their work over the next year.

Summary of anticipated activities

MITC will determine activities for the biennium at their next meeting and will update on future activities if requested by the Governor or legislature.

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

Although MITC has only had one business meeting, there is significant excitement about its potential impact on trade, culture, education, and more. MITC will provide updates as their work progresses through the biennium.