

Montana State Records Committee



**Report to the Governor and Montana State Legislature
Report Period: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2024**

August 30, 2024

State Records Committee Responsibilities

The State Records Committee (SRC) is authorized by statute ([2-6-1107, MCA](#)). The purpose of the committee is to act as a resource for executive branch agencies and others by staying at the forefront of records management best practices. The statutory duties established in [2-6-1108, MCA](#) include:

- Gathering and disseminating information on all phases of records management;
- Advise the Secretary of State in developing records management standards, guidelines, and training materials;
- Developing guidelines to help agencies identify, maintain, and secure essential records;
- Serve as a forum for continuing collaboration among records management, information technology, and legal professionals throughout state agencies;
- Provide recommendations to the Secretary of State for rulemaking regarding public records management;
- Regularly review existing public records laws and make recommendations to the Secretary of State regarding pursuing statutory changes; and
- Report biennially to the Governor and the Legislature on the activities of the committee in accordance with [5-11-222, MCA](#).

The SRC is comprised of representatives from the Department of Administration, the Legislative Auditor, the Attorney General, the Secretary of State, the Montana Historical Society, the Governor, the Clerk of the Supreme Court, the Chief Information Officer, and members representing executive branch agencies.

Committee Members (during reporting period):

Member Name	Representing	Term
Andy Ritter, Chair	Secretary of State's Office	8/5/2022 – current
Anita Milanovich	Governor's Office	2/22/2021 – current
Bowen Greenwood	The Clerk of the Supreme Court	1/1/2019 – current
Deborah Butler	Legislative Audit Division	10/1/2021 – 12/31/2023
Jill Hamilton	Department of Revenue	10/1/2021 – 9/30/2024
Kevin Gilbertson	State Chief Information Officer's Office	1/1/2021 - current
Kenneth Varns	Legislative Audit Division	1/1/2023 - current
Laray Jenks	Department of Justice	3/17/2022 – current
Lucas Hamilton	Public Service Commission	10/1/2023 – 9/30/2026
Molly Plummer	State Auditor's Office	10/1/2021 – 9/30/2024
Ray Dagnall, Chair	Secretary of State's Office	3/18/2018 – 8/4/2022
Rich Aarstad	Montana Historical Society	1/1/2021 – current
Tracy Cuddy	Department of Transportation	10/1/2021 – 9/30/2024
Yvette Englert	Department of Administration	10/1/2021 - current

State Records Committee Deliberations

Biennium Topics for Records Management Improvement

- Updated Email Retention Guidelines
- Records Management of Social Media
- Records Disposal Process and Delegation of Authority
- Records management of Geographic Information System Mapping (GIS)
- Records management of Generative Artificial Intelligence
- Updated resources posted on Secretary of State Website

August 4, 2022

The first committee meeting was in person. Chairman Ray Dagnall announced this was his last committee meeting and informed the committee that Andy Ritter with the Secretary of State's Office will be filling the role as chairman in future meetings. Mr. Ritter provided a brief presentation of the takeaways from the National Association of Government Archivists and Record Administrators (NAGARA) Annual Conference. During this meeting, the committee expressed high interest in finalizing guidelines and best practices for email retention for agencies.

November 30, 2022

This committee meeting was held in person. The committee primarily focused its discussion on email retention standards and updating the current email retention guidelines. Chairman Ritter also introduced a few topics including records management for geographic information systems (GIS) and agency records rolling disposal requests. The committee elected to provide final approval on the updated email retention guidance by the end of year 2022.

March 6, 2023

This committee meeting was held during 2023 Legislative Session online via Microsoft Teams. Chairman Ritter provided an update that the approved email retention guidelines were published on the Secretary of State's website. Chairman Ritter also provided to the committee an update to Senate Bill 374. This was a bill related to changes to the local government records disposal processes which provided local governments the ability to dispose of records without prior approval if the records fell within approved retention schedules.

June 21, 2023

This committee meeting was held in person. Chairman Ritter provided an update to the committee regarding the first phase of changes to the records disposal request approval process. Mr. Ritter noted the old process was cumbersome and the changes streamlined the processes by using the electronic signature application, DocuSign and explained that by streamlining this process, it will provide for a more efficient way of tracking the approval status and quicker turnaround times for approving requests. The committee continued discussions on records management for GIS and agency rolling disposal requests.

September 25, 2023

This committee meeting was held in person. The committee reviewed the email retention guidelines and determined there were no necessary updates needed at that time. Chairman Ritter presented to the committee information from the NAGARA Annual Conference and introduced a new topic related to records management of generative artificial intelligence (AI). Committee Member Kevin Gilbertson provided information related to the technical standards that the State Information Technology Services Division published for agency reference.

December 8, 2023

This committee meeting was held in person. The committee continued their discussion on records management of generative AI and how it is being used. Chairman Ritter introduced social media records management as an additional topic for the committee to discuss. Committee Member Yvette Englert provided a status update regarding the implementation of the centralized approach to public records requests that was passed during the 2023 legislative session.

March 28, 2024

This committee meeting was held in person. Chairman Ritter presented to the committee conceptual changes for streamlining the state records disposal process. The changes presented included streamlining the process by adopting a similar approach to the local government records disposal process that had passed during the 2023 legislative session. The goal was to create consistency across all levels of government and provide state agencies the ability to effectively manage their records. The committee approved the concept to bring forward for a legal review. The committee continued discussions on social media records management and determined to classify social media records as a non-record type on the basis that social media is mainly being utilized to reach the public and stakeholders regarding items that already have established retention schedules. The committee also continued discussions on records management for generative AI.

June 26, 2024

This committee meeting was held in person. The committee approved the draft proposed administrative rule changes related to streamlining the state records disposal process and state agency delegation of authority. Chairman Ritter and Committee Member Gilbertson noted that they will work together to on drafting guidance for generative AI records management to present to the committee at a future meeting.

State Records Committee Activity and Recommendations

This section provides a summary of the activities that took place and recommendations made during the biennium:

The SRC and Secretary of State's Office continued to further enhance the Records Management section of the SOS website.

The SRC had worked with the Secretary of State's Office in the interim on drafting and providing updated guidelines regarding email retention. The goal was to update the guidance into a usable document that provided agencies more of a procedural approach to email retention best practices. The guidelines were approved in December of 2022 and published on the SOS website.

The SRC in the interim worked on providing recommendations to the Secretary of State's Office regarding streamlining agency records disposal processes and agency delegated authority. The recommended changes will create many efficiencies and consistency across all levels of government and allow agencies to effectively manage their records. The Secretary of State's Office accepted the recommendations during the reporting period and will plan to submit an administrative rule change package proposing the recommendations. The changes are anticipated to be adopted in January 2025.

The SRC determined to classify social media records as a non-record type as social media platforms are mainly used as a communication medium to notify the public and interested parties of items (documents, press releases, etc.) that already have established records retention schedules. The committee will continue to monitor and evaluate this area over time to determine additional guidance is needed.

The SRC will continue to discuss records management generative AI and geographic information systems (GIS) in the upcoming reporting period and provide guidance for agencies on records management best practices.

Records Management Areas Requiring Further Improvement

This section provides a brief list of areas in records management requiring further improvement that the SRC has recommended to discuss and/or continue discussing over the next biennium. The SRC is also planning to determine additional areas requiring improvement at their next meeting.

- Records Management for Generative Artificial Intelligence – continued discussions
- Records Management for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) – continued discussions
- Additional Educational Resources and Guidance for Agencies

Records Management Resources and Guidelines Provided by Secretary of State's Office on Behalf of State Records Committee

- Records Management Information and Resources – <https://sosmt.gov/records/>
- The State General Retention Schedules – <https://sosmt.gov/records/state/>
- Training information discussing retention and disposition:
<https://sosmt.gov/records/rim-retention/>
<https://sosmt.gov/records/disposing-records/>