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MPI Challenges Montana City Transit Claims

Steve Fetveit (7/19/10)



Montanans concerned about public spending or climate change and air pollution should be looking for something beyond the city bus system. That's the message contained in an Op-Ed article released by the [Montana Policy Institute](#).

In a recent study, MPI finds Montana bus systems are inefficient, expensive and tough on the environment. The study compares cost and subsidies per passenger mile for the Billings, Bozeman, Great Falls, and Missoula bus and paratransit systems to average cost of driving a passenger mile in Montana. What it finds is: Drivers in Montana are paying a little under 23 cents per passenger mile while public transit spends about \$1.76 per passenger mile. Ninty percent of the transit expense is paid for by non-transit users.

The Policy Institute concludes that Montana cities need to decide if they're in the business of moving people or of running buses.

We contacted the Missoula Mountain Line for comment. They advised they are reviewing the study for accuracy. We'll follow up with administrators Tuesday for their response.

The Montana Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan policy research center based in Bozeman. Randall O'Toole, a Senior Fellow at the CATO Institute, wrote the study. CATO is a Libertarian think tank in Washington D.C.

To review the MPI study for yourself, [click here](#).

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