

## MINUTES

### MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 67th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

#### COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

**Call to Order:** Chair Steve Gunderson, on February 26, 2021 at 4:10 PM, in Room 172 Capitol

#### ROLL CALL

**Members Present:**

Rep. Steve Gunderson, Chair (R)  
Rep. Willis Curdy, Vice Chair (D)  
Rep. Rhonda Knudsen, Vice Chair (R)  
Rep. Robert Farris-Olsen (D)  
Rep. Ross H. Fitzgerald (R)  
Rep. Tom France (D)  
Rep. Steven Galloway (R)  
Rep. Steve Gist (R)  
Rep. Marty Malone (R)  
Rep. Marilyn Marler (D)  
Rep. Brian Putnam (R)  
Rep. Kenneth Walsh (R)

**Members Excused:**

Rep. Paul Fielder (R)  
Rep. Mark Noland (R)  
Rep. Marvin Weatherwax (D)

**Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:**

Jacquelynn Bomgardner, Committee Secretary  
Joe Kolman, Legislative Branch  
Rachael Foe, Remote Meeting Coordinator

**Audio Committees:** These minutes are in outline form only. They provide a list of participants and a record of official action taken by the committee. The link to the audio recording of the meeting is available on the Legislative Branch website.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing & Date Posted: HJ 17, 2/24/2021; HB 554, 2/24/2021; HB 594, 2/24/2021; HB 599, 2/24/2021; HB 527, 2/24/2021; HB 419, 2/22/2021

Executive Action on: HJ 17; HB 419; HB 527; HB 554; HB 594; HB 599; HB 518

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 419**

16:09:26 **Motion:** Without objection Rep. Gunderson moved that **HB 419 BE TABLED.**

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 518**

16:09:52 **Motion:** Without objection Rep. Gunderson moved that **HB 518 BE TABLED.**

**HEARING ON HJ 17**

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

16:11:06 Rep. Marilyn Marler (D), HD 90, opened the hearing on HJ 17, Declare noxious weed awareness week.

**Proponents' Testimony:**

16:12:49 Dave Burch, Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA)

**EXHIBIT(nah41a01)**

16:16:22 Jessica Bushnell, Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA)

16:17:05 Ian Foley, Montana Department of Agriculture (AGR)

16:17:30 Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF)

16:17:58 Rep. Noland joined the meeting.

16:18:06 Pam Converse, Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA); Rocky Mountain Front Weed Roundtable (RMFWR)

16:18:13 Rep. Noland joined the meeting.

**Opponents' Testimony:** None

**Informational Testimony:** None

**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

16:19:39 Rep. Galloway

**Closing by Sponsor:**

16:19:56 Rep. Marler

16:21:43 Rep. Marler left the meeting.

**HEARING ON HB 594**

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

16:21:50 Rep. Joe Read (R), HD 93, opened the hearing on HB 594, Exempt DNRC grants from environmental review.

**Proponents' Testimony:**

16:23:15 Jason Todhunter, Montana Logging Association (MLA)

**EXHIBIT(nah41a02)**

16:25:54 Sonya Germann, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)  
[EXHIBIT\(nah41a03\)](#)

16:29:00 Rep. Noland left the meeting

**Opponents' Testimony:**

16:29:06 Josh Butterfly, self

16:29:50 Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)

**Informational Testimony:**

16:31:48 Matt Arno, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)

**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

16:32:23 Rep. France

16:33:03 Rep. Read

16:34:04 Vice Chair Curdy

16:35:25 Sonya Germann, DNRC

16:36:25 Rep. France

16:37:34 Sonya Germann, DNRC

**Closing by Sponsor:**

16:38:51 Rep. Read

**HEARING ON HB 527**

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

16:39:57 Rep. Fiona Nave (R), HD 57, opened the hearing on HB 527, Require draft proposals before initiating a county zoning/planning board.

16:42:07 Rep. Marler joined the meeting.

**Proponents' Testimony:** None

**Opponents' Testimony:**

16:46:44 Sam Sill, Montana Association of Realtors (MAR)

16:50:49 David Katz, self

[EXHIBIT\(nah41a04\)](#)

16:52:39 Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)

**Informational Testimony:** None

**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

16:54:22 Rep. Putnam

16:54:44 Rep. Nave

16:55:42 Rep. Walsh

16:56:56 Rep. Nave

16:58:15 Rep. France

16:59:42 Rep. Nave

17:01:17 Vice Chair Curdy

17:02:54 Sam Sill, MAR  
17:03:20 Chair Gunderson  
17:07:13 David Katz, self  
17:07:18 Chair Gunderson  
17:08:07 Alan Olson, Montana Petroleum Association (MPA)  
17:08:54 Rep. France  
17:09:05 Chair Gunderson  
17:09:20 Rep. France  
17:09:27 Alan Olson, MPA  
17:09:40 Rep. France  
17:10:57 Alan Olson, MPA

**Closing by Sponsor:**

17:11:22 Rep. Nave  
  
17:13:26 Rep. Fielder joined the meeting.

**HEARING ON HB 554**

**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

17:16:29 Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27, opened the hearing on HB 554, Require legislative approval of national heritage areas, historic trails.

**Proponents' Testimony:**

17:17:59 Dana Darrington, Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA)  
17:20:50 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA); Montana Cattlewomen (MCW); Montana Association of State Grazing Districts (MASGD) Treasure State Resources Association (TSRA)  
17:23:10 Abigail St. Lawrence, Montana Building Industry Association (MBIA)  
17:23:54 Rep. France left the meeting.  
17:24:43 Sam Sill, Montana Association of Realtors (MAR)  
17:25:24 Mitch Konen, Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA)

**EXHIBIT(nah41a05)**

17:27:03 Jess Bandel, Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF)  
17:28:50 Dave McEwen, Montana Wool Growers Association (MWGA)  
17:29:15 Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF)  
17:29:57 Ronda Wiggers, Great Fall Home Builders Association (GFHBA)  
17:31:28 Terry Thompson, Great Falls Association of Realtors (GFAR)  
17:33:35 Katie Hanning, self  
17:33:57 Commissioner Ross Butcher, Fergus County; Montana Natural Resource Coalition (MtNRC)  
17:36:08 Nathan Keane, Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA)  
17:37:35 Commissioner Miles Hutton, Blaine County; Montana Natural Resource Coalition (MtNRC)  
17:38:07 Rep. Noland joined the meeting.  
17:38:33 Rea Grulkowski, self

**Opponents' Testimony:**

17:42:37 Laurie Little Dog, self

[EXHIBIT\(nah41a06\)](#)**Informational Testimony:** None**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

17:43:21 Rep. Gist  
17:43:50 Rep. Fielder  
17:44:13 Rep. Kassmier  
17:44:25 Rep. Malone  
17:44:44 Rep. Fitzgerald  
17:45:26 Rep. France joined the meeting.  
17:45:32 Dana Darrlington, MSGA  
17:46:26 Rep. Fitzgerald  
17:46:56 Terry Thompson, GFHBA  
17:48:33 Rep. Fitzgerald  
17:49:02 Chair Gunderson  
17:49:40 Rep. Galloway  
17:51:41 Terry Thompson, GFHBA  
17:53:25 Rep. Galloway  
17:53:42 Vice Chair R. Knudsen  
17:54:17 Terry Thompson, GFHBA  
17:55:43 Rep. Galloway  
17:55:58 Terry Thompson, GFHBA  
17:56:17 Chair Gunderson  
17:57:23 Dana Darrlington, MSGA  
17:59:03 Chair Gunderson  
17:59:21 Rep. Kassmier  
17:59:35 Chair Gunderson  
17:59:39 Rep. Kassmier  
17:59:56 Rep. Galloway  
18:00:38 Rep. Kassmier

**Closing by Sponsor:**

18:01:10 Rep. Kassmier  
  
18:02:46 Brief Recess  
18:12:28 Reconvened with Vice Chair R. Knudsen as Chair.

**HEARING ON HB 599****Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

18:12:42 Rep. Steve Gunderson (R), HD 1, opened the hearing on HB 599, Generally revise opencut laws.

**Proponents' Testimony:**

18:15:43 Steve Wade, Montana Contractors Association (MCA)  
18:16:47 Michael Bacon, Dawson and McCone County Road Department

[EXHIBIT\(nah41a07\)](#)

18:19:03 Rob Koelzer, Schellinger Construction; Montana Contractors Association (MCA)  
[EXHIBIT\(nah41a08\)](#)

18:21:06 Mike Newton, Fisher Sand and Gravel Company  
18:22:53 David Smith, Montana Contractors Association (MCA)

**Opponents' Testimony:**

18:24:38 Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)

**Informational Testimony:**

18:28:47 Christopher Cronin, Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

**Questions from Committee Members and Responses:**

18:29:24 Rep. Galloway  
18:32:00 Chris Cronin, DEQ  
18:32:18 Rep. Malone  
18:33:31 Rep. Gunderson  
18:33:42 Steve Wade, MCA  
18:34:21 Vice Chair Curdy  
18:34:42 Anne Hedges, MEIC

**Closing by Sponsor:**

18:36:52 Rep. Gunderson  
  
18:40:04 Recess  
19:00:03 Reconvened with Rep. Gunderson as Chair.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HJ 17**

19:00:42 **Motion/Vote:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HJ 17 DO PASS**. Motion carried unanimously by voice vote. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 594**

19:01:53 **Motion/Vote:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 594 DO PASS**. Motion carried 10-5 by roll call vote with Rep. Curdy, Rep. Farris-Olsen, Rep. France, Rep. Marler and Rep. Weatherwax voting no. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 527**

19:03:27 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 527 DO PASS**.  
19:03:36 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 527 BE AMENDED**.  
[EXHIBIT\(nah41a09\)](#)

**Discussion:**

19:04:00 Rep. Putnam

19:04:42 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

19:05:10 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 527 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

19:05:22 Rep. France

19:06:16 Rep. Malone

19:06:48 Rep. France

19:08:10 Rep. Malone

19:08:35 **Vote:** Motion carried 9-6 by roll call vote with Rep. Curdy, Rep. Farris-Olsen, Rep. France, Rep. Marler, Rep. Putnam and Rep. Weatherwax voting no. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 554**

19:09:43 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 554 DO PASS.**

**Discussion:**

19:09:59 Rep. Galloway

19:10:32 Vice Chair Curdy

19:11:28 Rep. Malone

19:11:57 Chair Gunderson

19:12:36 Rep. Galloway

19:12:56 **Vote:** Motion carried 13-2 by roll call vote with Rep. Farris-Olsen and Rep. Marler voting no. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 599**

19:14:05 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 599 DO PASS.**

19:14:17 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 599 BE AMENDED.**

**EXHIBIT(nah41a10)**

**Discussion:**

19:14:34 Joe Kolman, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

19:16:03 Rep. Malone

19:16:22 Joe Kolman, LSD

19:16:38 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

19:17:06 **Motion:** Rep. R. Knudsen moved that **HB 599 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

**Discussion:**

19:17:20 Rep. Marler

19:17:49 Chair Gunderson

19:18:17 Rep. Malone

19:18:58 **Vote:** Motion carried 10-5 by roll call vote with Rep. Curdy, Rep. Farris-Olsen, Rep. France, Rep. Marler and Rep. Weatherwax voting no. Rep. Weatherwax voted by proxy.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 19:20:14

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Jacquelynn Bomgardner, Secretary

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Additional Documents:

**EXHIBIT**([nah41aad.pdf](#))