

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 67th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: Chair Steve Gunderson, on March 10, 2021 at 3:00 PM, in Room 172
Capitol

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Steve Gunderson, Chair (R)
Rep. Rhonda Knudsen, Vice Chair (R)
Rep. Robert Farris-Olsen (D)
Rep. Paul Fielder (R)
Rep. Ross H. Fitzgerald (R)
Rep. Tom France (D)
Rep. Steve Gist (R)
Rep. Marty Malone (R)
Rep. Brian Putnam (R)
Rep. Marvin Weatherwax (D)

Members Excused:

Rep. Willis Curdy, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. Steven Galloway (R)
Rep. Marilyn Marler (D)
Rep. Mark Noland (R)
Rep. Kenneth Walsh (R)

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: SB 13, 3/8/2021; SB 20, 3/8/2021; SB 55, 3/8/2021

15:05:36 Rep. Marler joined the meeting.

HEARING ON SB 13

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

15:05:44 Sen. Jill Cohenour (D), SD 42, opened the hearing on SB 13, Revise DNRC adjudication benchmarks.

15:06:06 Rep. Walsh joined the meeting.

15:07:32 Rep. Galloway joined the meeting.

Proponents' Testimony:

15:08:44 Krista Lee Evans, Senior Water Rights Coalition (SrWRC); Association of Gallatin Agriculture Irrigators (AGAI)

15:12:28 The Honorable Judge Stephen Brown, Montana Water Court (MWC)

15:13:52 Holly Franz, NorthWestern Energy (NWE)

15:14:33 Mike Murphy, Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA)

15:14:51 Vice Chair Curdy joined the meeting.

15:15:11 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA)

15:15:52 Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF)

15:16:45 Matt Murphy, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)

[EXHIBIT\(nah48a01\)](#)

Opponents' Testimony: None

Informational Testimony: None

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

15:18:39 Rep. Malone

15:19:05 Sen. Cohenour

15:19:59 Rep. Malone

15:20:17 Judge Stephen Brown, MWC

15:21:05 Vice Chair Curdy

15:21:46 Judge Stephen Brown, MWC

15:22:34 Chair Gunderson

15:25:06 Judge Stephen Brown, MWC

Closing by Sponsor:

15:25:44 Sen. Cohenour

HEARING ON SB 20

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

15:26:54 Sen. Jill Cohenour (D), SD 42, opened the hearing on SB 20, Clarifying use of river basin councils.

Proponents' Testimony:

15:32:48 Holly Franz, NorthWestern Energy (NWE)

Opponents' Testimony: None

Informational Testimony:

15:34:52 Paul Azevedo, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

15:35:21 Rep. Fielder
15:35:40 Sen. Cohenour
15:36:03 Rep. Malone
15:38:04 Sen. Cohenour
15:38:38 Vice Chair R. Knudsen
15:41:52 Sen. Cohenour
15:43:15 Rep. Malone
15:44:05 Sen. Cohenour
15:45:44 Vice Chair Curdy
15:46:06 Vice Chair R. Knudsen
15:46:18 Sen. Cohenour
15:47:18 Chair Gunderson
15:47:36 Sen. Cohenour

Closing by Sponsor:

15:48:17 Sen. Cohenour

HEARING ON SB 55**Opening Statement by Sponsor:**

15:49:24 Sen. Jill Cohenour (D), SD 42, opened the hearing on SB 55, Revise the Process for Water Right Ownership Updates.

Proponents' Testimony:

15:57:54 Krista Lee Evans, Senior Water Rights Coalition (SrWRC); Association of Gallatin Agriculture Irrigators (AGAI)

EXHIBIT(nah48a02)

16:02:41 The Honorable Judge Stephen Brown, Montana Water Court (MWC)
16:04:19 William Gowen, Montan Land Title Association (MLTA)
16:07:14 Holly Franz, NorthWestern Energy (NWE)
16:08:29 Mike Murphy, Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA)
16:09:03 Rachel Cone, Montan Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF)
16:09:59 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stockgrowers Association (MSGA)

Opponents' Testimony: None

Informational Testimony:

16:11:48 Millie Heffner, Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC)

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

16:12:16 Rep. Galloway
16:13:11 Sen. Cohenour
16:13:25 William Gowen, MLTA
16:14:01 Rep. Malone
16:16:26 Sen. Cohenour

16:16:36 Krista Lee Evans, SrWRC; AGAI
16:17:30 Rep. Malone
16:17:59 Rep. Putnam left the meeting.
16:18:13 Krista Lee Evans, SrWRC; AGAI
16:18:55 Rep. Galloway left the meeting.
16:19:04 Vice Chair Curdy
16:19:18 Rep. France left the meeting.
16:19:41 William Gowen, MLTA
16:21:59 Rep. Fitzgerald
16:23:07 Millie Heffner, DNRC
16:23:42 Rep. Walsh
16:24:19 Krista Lee Evans, SrWRC; AGAI
16:24:54 Chair Gunderson
16:25:09 Millie Heffner, DNRC

Closing by Sponsor:

16:25:32 Sen. Cohenour

16:27:22 Chair Gunderson
16:27:43 Sen. Cohenour
16:28:05 Chair Gunderson

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:28:34

Jacquelynn Bomgardner, Secretary

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Additional Documents:

EXHIBIT([nah48aad.pdf](#))