

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE 67th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: Chair Jeffrey W. Welborn, on March 15, 2021 at 3:00 PM, in Room 303 Capitol

ROLL CALL

Members Present in the Committee Room:

Sen. Jeffrey W. Welborn, Chair (R)
Sen. Jason D. Small, Vice Chair (R)
Sen. Bob Brown (R)
Sen. Jill Cohenour (D)
Sen. Bruce Gillespie (R)
Sen. Brian Hoven (R)
Sen. Tom Jacobson (D)
Sen. Mike Lang (R)

Members Present by Zoom Video Conference:

Sen. Pat Flowers, Vice Chair (D)
Sen. JP Pomnichowski (D)

Members Excused:

Sen. Duane Ankney (R)
Sen. Ryan Lynch (D)

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lauren de Paepe, Committee Secretary
Jason Mohr, Legislative Branch
Jacquie Simmons, 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: HB 594, 3/9/2021; HB 599, 3/9/2021; HJ 15, 3/9/2021
Executive Action: HB 173 - Be Concurred in

HEARING ON HJ 15

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

15:04:38 Rep. Marilyn Marler (D), HD 90, opened the hearing on HJ15, Resolution to recognize benefits of connected trail networks across Montana.

Proponents' Testimony:

15:07:35 Amy Grisak, Montana Trail 406 Association

15:09:51 Laurie Richards, Lincoln

15:11:11 Sen. Lang entered the meeting.

Additional Testimony Received:

[EXHIBIT\(nas51a01\)](#)

Opponents' Testimony: None

Informational Testimony: None

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: None

Closing by Sponsor:

15:12:54 Rep. Marler

HEARING ON HB 599

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

15:14:35 Rep. Steve Gunderson (R), HD 1, opened the hearing on HB599, Generally revise opencut laws.

15:14:37 Chair Welborn gave the duties of the chair to Vice Chair Small and left the meeting.

Proponents' Testimony:

15:17:47 David Smith, executive director, Montana Contractors' Association (MCA)

15:20:51 Brian Thompson, MCA

15:23:13 Mike Newton, operations manager, Fisher Sand and Gravel Company, Glendive

15:26:33 Eric Bryson, Montana Association of Counties (MACo)

15:27:21 Gary Forrester, Knife River Corporation

15:27:57 Hal Fuglevand, general manager, Knife River Corporation, Billings

[EXHIBIT\(nas51a02\)](#)

15:30:37 Rob Koelzer, Schellinger Construction

Opponents' Testimony:

15:32:41 Colleen Moullet, citizen, Huntley

15:36:26 Tim Moullet, citizen, Huntley

15:37:44 Fred McMurry, citizen, Billings

[EXHIBIT\(nas51a03\)](#)

15:39:52 Krista Lee Evans, Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators; Senior Water Rights Coalition

15:41:00 John Bloomquist, attorney, Victor landowner

15:44:42 Archie Harper, chairman, West Valley Citizens Alliance Network, Helena

15:49:11 Bob Grudier, citizen, Helena

EXHIBIT(nas51a04)

15:52:14 Abigail St. Lawrence, Montana Building Industry Association (MBIA); also speaking for Montana Trout Unlimited and Montana Association of Realtors

15:54:20 Marty Stebbins, citizen, Helena

EXHIBIT(nas51a05)

15:56:30 Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)

15:59:58 Mayre Flowers, Montana Smart Growth Coalition

16:03:13 Amy Seaman, director of policy and science, Montana Audubon

EXHIBIT(nas51a06)

16:08:01 Chris Nixon, president, Sacajawea Audubon Society

EXHIBIT(nas51a07)

16:10:04 Don Jackson, citizen, Bozeman

EXHIBIT(nas51a08)

16:12:48 Linda Newgard, citizen, Kalispell

EXHIBIT(nas51a09)

16:16:31 Daniel Kenney, former enforcement specialist, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

16:19:22 Chris Flann, Shepherd

16:21:53 Sen. Welborn entered the meeting.

Additional Testimony Received:

EXHIBIT(nas51a10)

Informational Testimony:

16:22:11 Ed Coleman, Coal and Opencut Mining Bureau chief, DEQ

16:22:47 Christopher Cronin, section supervisor, Opencut Mining Program, DEQ

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

16:23:15 Sen. Gillespie

16:23:50 Ms. St. Lawrence, MBIA

16:24:58 Chair Small gave the duties of the chair to Sen. Welborn.

16:25:38 Sen. Gillespie

16:26:04 Rep. Gunderson

16:26:48 Sen. Cohenour

16:27:24 Ms. Hedges, MEIC

16:28:48 Sen. Cohenour

16:29:31 Mr. Coleman, DEQ
 16:29:54 Sen. Lang
 16:30:57 Mr. Coleman
 16:31:38 Sen. Pomnichowski
 16:34:39 Mr. Coleman
 16:34:51 Sen. Brown
 16:39:32 Rep. Gunderson
 16:39:36 Sen. Brown
 16:39:55 Mr. McMurry, Billings
 16:40:16 Mr. Thompson, MCA
 16:40:45 Sen. Brown
 16:40:56 Mr. Thompson
 16:41:32 Sen. Cohenour
 16:41:48 Mr. Thompson
 16:42:00 Sen. Cohenour
 16:42:14 Ms. St. Lawrence
 16:44:36 Sen. Lang
 16:46:29 Rep. Gunderson
 16:46:40 Sen. Hoven
 16:49:10 Mr. Thompson
 16:49:30 Chair Welborn
 16:50:59 Mr. Thompson

Closing by Sponsor:

16:51:59 Rep. Gunderson

HEARING ON HB 594

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

16:57:28 Rep. Joe Read (R), HD 93, opened the hearing on HB594, Exempt DNRC grants from environmental review.

Proponents' Testimony:

16:59:15 Jason Todhunter, Montana Logging Association (MLA)

17:01:41 Jessie Luther, Idaho Forest Group

17:02:18 Jim McCormick, citizen, Lewis and Clark County

17:04:13 Sen. Cohenour left the meeting.

17:05:29 Julia Altemus, Montana Wood Products Association

EXHIBIT(nas51a11)

17:06:51 Matt Arno, Forestry Assistance Bureau chief, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

EXHIBIT(nas51a12)

Opponents' Testimony:

17:08:57 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited

17:12:40 Laurie Little Dog, citizen

EXHIBIT(nas51a13)

17:13:32 Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center

Informational Testimony: None

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

17:15:05 Sen. Hoven
17:15:24 Rep. Read
17:15:38 Mr. Todhunter, MLA
17:17:08 Sen. Flowers
17:18:48 Mr. Arno, DNRC
17:19:13 Sen. Hoven
17:19:42 Mr. Arno
17:20:15 Sen. Pomnichowski
17:20:49 Mr. Arno
17:21:14 Sen. Gillespie
17:22:39 Mr. Todhunter

Closing by Sponsor:

17:22:54 Rep. Read

Committee Business:

17:24:45 Chair Welborn
17:26:08 Sen. Flowers
17:26:29 Chair Welborn
17:26:38 Jason Mohr, Legislative Services Division
17:26:43 Sen. Jacobson
17:26:49 Chair Welborn
17:27:33 Sen. Hoven
17:28:13 Chair Welborn

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 173

17:28:21 **Motion/Vote:** Sen. Small moved that **HB 173 BE CONCURRED IN**. Motion carried 10-0 by voice vote. Sen. Ankney voted by proxy. Sen. Cohenour and Sen. Lynch were excused. Sen. Lang will carry the bill.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 5:31 PM

Lauren de Paepe, Secretary

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Additional Documents:

EXHIBIT([nas51aad.pdf](#))