

MINUTES
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION
COMMITTEE ON (H) NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: Chair Rep. Steve Gunderson-R, on February 13, 2023 at 3:08 PM, in 172

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rep. Steve Gunderson, Chair (R)
Rep. Steve Gist, Vice Chair (R)
Rep. Marilyn Marler, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. Jill Cohenour (D)
Rep. Ross Fitzgerald (R)
Rep. Tom France (D)
Rep. Jedediah Hinkle (R)
Rep. Jonathan Karlen (D)
Rep. Marty Malone (R)
Rep. Russel Miner (R)
Rep. Gary Parry (R)
Rep. Kenneth Walsh (R)

Members Excused: Rep. Rhonda Knudsen (R)
Rep. Sue Vinton (R)
Rep. Marvin Weatherwax (D)

Staff Present: LJ Jennings, Secretary
Joe Kolman, Research Analyst
John Olson, Attorney

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 406 02/07/2023

HB 418 02/07/2023

HB 435 02/08/2023

Executive Action:

16:37:19

Rep. France has arrived

HEARING ON HB 418 - Revise limitations on irrigable acreage

Opening Statement:

15:09:34 Rep. Ross Fitzgerald (R), HD 17, opened the hearing on HB 418, Revise limitations on irrigable acreage.

Proponent Testimony:

15:10:32 Earling Juel, District Manager, Greenfields Irrigation District, (GID)

15:16:03 Mike Murphy, Montana Water Resources Association, (MWRA)

15:17:29 Jasmine Krotkov, Montana Farmers Union, (MFU)

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

15:19:47 Rep. Steve Gunderson

15:20:23 Mike Murphy, MWRA

15:21:00 Rep. Steve Gunderson

15:21:03 Rep. Russel Miner

15:21:50 Earling Juel, GID

15:24:06 Rep. Kenneth Walsh

15:24:41 Mike Murphy, MWRA

15:25:09 Rep. Kenneth Walsh

15:25:33 Mike Murphy, MWRA

15:26:02 Rep. Gary Parry
15:26:26 Mike Murphy, MWRA
15:27:09 Rep. Gary Parry
15:27:14 Mike Murphy, MWRA
15:27:27 Rep. Steve Gunderson
15:27:37 Mike Murphy, MWRA
15:28:11 Rep. Steve Gunderson
15:28:17 Earling Juel, GID
15:29:23 Rep. Steve Gunderson
15:29:24 Rep. Russel Miner
15:29:41 Earling Juel, GID
15:31:10 Rep. Steve Gunderson

Closing Statement:

15:31:19 Rep. Ross Fitzgerald (R), HD 17, closed the hearing on HB 418.

HEARING ON HB 435 - Revise water right laws related to exempt wells

Opening Statement:

15:32:56 Rep. John Fitzpatrick (R), HD 77, opened the hearing on HB 435, Revise water right laws related to exempt wells.

Discussion:

15:37:24 Rep. Ross Fitzgerald left the meeting.

Proponent Testimony:

15:39:07 Rhonda Wiggers, Montana Water Well Drillers Association, (MWWDA)

15:40:11 Adrienne Cotton, Montana Building Industry Association, (MBIA)

Opponent Testimony:

- 15:40:46 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited, (MTU)
- 15:42:10 Krista Lee Evans, Senior Water Rights Coalition,(SWRC) and Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators, (AGAI)
- 15:43:34 Andrew Gorder, Clark Fork Coalition, (CFC)
- 15:45:13 Ann Schwend, Montana Environmental Information Center, (MEIC)

Informational Witness Testimony:

- 15:47:56 Nate Ward, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, (DNRC)

Questions from Committee:

- 15:48:25 Rep. Russel Miner
- 15:49:03 Rep. John Fitzpatrick-R
- 15:49:35 Rep. Russel Miner
- 15:49:44 Rep. John Fitzpatrick-R
- 15:49:55 Rep. Gary Parry
- 15:50:21 Rep. John Fitzpatrick-R
- 15:50:59 Rep. Gary Parry
- 15:51:10 Rep. John Fitzpatrick-R
- 15:51:47 Rep. Tom France
- 15:52:41 Ann Schwend, MEIC
- 15:54:54 Rep. Tom France
- 15:55:22 Ann Schwend, MEIC
- 15:56:31 Rep. Gary Parry
- 15:57:01 Ann Schwend, MEIC
- 15:58:31 Rep. Jill Cohenour
- 15:59:04 Krista Lee Evans, SWRA and AGAI
- 16:00:27 Rep. Jill Cohenour

16:00:53 Krista Lee Evans, SWRC and AGAI
16:01:51 Nate Ward, DNRC
16:02:01 Rep. Jill Cohenour
16:02:37 Nate Ward, DNRC
16:03:12 Rep. Marty Malone
16:04:04 Nate Ward, DNRC
16:04:15 Rep. Steve Gunderson

Closing Statement:

16:04:21 Rep. John Fitzpatrick (R), HD 77, closed the hearing on HB 435.

HEARING ON HB 406 - Clarify regulations for ponds

Opening Statement:

16:15:39 Rep. Fred Anderson (R), HD 20, opened the hearing on HB 406, Clarify regulations for ponds.

Proponent Testimony:

16:17:50 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited, (MTU)

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

16:19:38 Nate Ward, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, (DNRC)

16:20:07 Eileen Ryce, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

16:07:15 Recessed

16:07:27 Rep. Fitzgerald has left

16:15:05 Reconvened

16:16:12	Rep. France has left
16:20:43	Rep. Marty Malone
16:21:06	Rep. Fred Anderson-R
16:22:05	Rep. Steve Gist
16:22:18	Rep. Fred Anderson-R
16:22:36	Rep. Gary Parry
16:23:04	Rep. Fred Anderson-R
16:23:23	Rep. Gary Parry
16:23:32	Rep. Fred Anderson-R
16:23:56	Rep. Kenneth Walsh
16:24:45	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:25:38	Rep. Kenneth Walsh
16:25:52	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:26:36	Rep. Kenneth Walsh
16:27:00	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:27:24	Rep. Jedediah Hinkle
16:27:46	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:28:26	Rep. Marilyn Marler
16:28:53	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:29:47	Rep. Marilyn Marler
16:30:09	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:30:29	Rep. Marilyn Marler
16:30:44	Nate Ward, DNRC
16:31:07	Rep. Marilyn Marler

16:31:39 Eileen Ryce, FWP
16:32:52 Rep. Jill Cohenour
16:33:23 Nate Ward, DNRC
16:34:05 Rep. Jill Cohenour
16:34:25 Nate Ward, DNRC
16:34:55 Rep. Jill Cohenour
16:35:20 Rep. Fred Anderson-R
16:35:42 Rep. Marty Malone
16:36:18 Nate Ward, DNRC

Closing Statement:

16:36:29 Rep. Fred Anderson (R), HD 20, closed the hearing on HB 406.

Discussion:

16:37:12 Rep. Rhonda Knudsen joined the meeting.
16:37:19 Rep. France has arrived

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:37:43

LJ Jennings, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230213NAHaad\)](#)