

MINUTES
MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION
COMMITTEE ON (H) FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

Call to Order: Chair Ross Fitzgerald-R, on February 23, 2023 at 3:14 PM, in 172

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rep. Ross Fitzgerald, Chair (R)
Rep. Tom France, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. Jedediah Hinkle, Vice Chair (R)
Rep. Denise Baum (D)
Rep. Edward Butcher (R)
Rep. Neil Duram (R)
Rep. Paul Fielder (R)
Rep. Jonathan Karlen (D)
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)
Rep. Denley Loge (R)
Rep. Russel Miner (R)
Rep. Gary Parry (R)
Rep. Bob Phalen (R)
Rep. Tanner Smith (R)

Members Excused: Rep. Lee Deming (R)
Rep. Marilyn Marler (D)
Rep. Eric Matthews (D)
Rep. Tyson Running Wolf (D)
Rep. Sue Vinton (R)

Staff Present: Toni Henneman, Research Analyst
LJ Jennings, Secretary
Rolf Johnson, 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 600 02/20/2023
HB 621 02/20/2023
HB 627 02/21/2023
HB 628 02/21/2023

HB 630 02/21/2023

HB 635 02/20/2023

HB 677 02/21/2023

Executive Action:

HB 522 DO PASS AS AMENDED

HB 548 DO PASS AS AMENDED

HB 596 DO PASS AS AMENDED

15:15:11 Rep. Matthews has arrived
15:15:35 Rep. Duram has left
15:16:05 Rep. Ler has left
15:17:23 Rep. Marler has arrived

HEARING ON HB 635 - Revise laws related to nonresident hunting and fishing

Opening Statement:

15:17:49 Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27, opened the hearing on HB 635, Revise laws related to nonresident hunting and fishing.

Proponent Testimony:

15:19:08 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF) and Montana Citizens Elk Management Coalition, (MCEMC)
15:22:58 Mac Minard, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, (MOGA)
15:26:24 Hannah Downey, Property and Environment Research Center, (PERC)

Opponent Testimony:

15:28:19 Kevin Farron, Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, (MCBCHA)
15:29:13 Rep. Bob Phalen left the meeting.
15:30:53 Zach Winfield, Self

Informational Witness Testimony:

15:32:23 Emily Cooper, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

15:32:53 Rep. Denise Baum
15:34:01 Emily Cooper, FWP Licensing Bureau Chief, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

15:34:04 Rep. Denise Baum

15:34:29 Emily Cooper, FWP Licensing Bureau Chief, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

15:34:35 Rep. Denise Baum

15:35:05 Emily Cooper, FWP Licensing Bureau Chief, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

15:35:27 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:35:55 Rep. Joshua Kassmier-R

15:36:03 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:36:13 Rep. Joshua Kassmier-R

15:36:23 Rep. Denise Baum

15:36:47 Rep. Joshua Kassmier-R

15:36:51 Rep. Denley Loge

15:37:15 Mac Minard, MOGA

15:38:36 Rep. Russel Miner

15:38:58 Emily Cooper, FWP Licensing Bureau Chief, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

15:39:02 Rep. Russel Miner

15:39:12 Emily Cooper, FWP Licensing Bureau Chief, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

15:39:37 Vice Chair Tom France

15:40:15 Rep. Joshua Kassmier-R

15:40:19 Vice Chair Tom France

15:40:39 Rep. Joshua Kassmier-R

Closing Statement:

15:41:04 Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R), HD 27, closed the hearing on HB 635.

HEARING ON HB 600 - Revise acreage for landowner preference hunting licenses

Opening Statement:

15:41:38 Rep. Marty Malone (R), HD 59, opened the hearing on HB 600, Revise acreage for landowner preference hunting licenses.

Discussion:

[EXHIBIT\(230223FIHa1\)](#)

Proponent Testimony:

None

Opponent Testimony:

15:44:51 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)

15:45:15 Kevin Farron, Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, (MCBCHA)

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

15:47:56 Emily Cooper, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

15:48:27 Rep. Denley Loge

15:49:03 Kevin Farron, MCBCHA

15:51:05 Rep. Edward Butcher

15:51:56 Kevin Farron, (MCBCHA)

15:53:03 Rep. Edward Butcher

Closing Statement:

15:54:14 Rep. Marty Malone (R), HD 59, closed the hearing on HB 600.

HEARING ON HB 621 - Revise land access laws for hunting and fishing

Opening Statement:

15:55:28 Rep. Jill Cohenour (D), HD 42, opened the hearing on HB 621, Revise land access laws for hunting and fishing.

Proponent Testimony:

15:58:44 Mac Minard, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, (MOGA)

15:59:24 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf joined the meeting.

16:00:20 Ben Lamb, Montana Citizens Elk Management Coalition, (MCEMC)

16:04:03 Kevin Farron, Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, (MCBCHA)

16:06:11 Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation, (MFBF)

16:06:43 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stockgrowers of Association, (MSGA)

Opponent Testimony:

16:07:52 Shelby DeMars, United Property Owners of Montana, (UPOM)

16:12:09 Tim McKenrick, Self

Informational Witness Testimony:

16:13:28 Phil Kilbreath, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

16:14:10 Rep. Denise Baum

16:14:46 Rep. Jill Cohenour-D

16:15:19 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle

16:16:11 Rep. Jill Cohenour-D

16:16:36 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle

16:17:45 Rep. Jill Cohenour-D

16:18:00 Phill Kilbreath, FWP

16:18:09 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle

16:18:16 Phil Kilbreath, FWP

16:19:12 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
16:19:27 Phil Kilbreath, FWP
16:19:41 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
16:19:53 Rep. Tanner Smith
16:20:27 Shelby DeMars, UPOM
16:21:15 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
16:21:17 Phil Kilbreath, FWP

Closing Statement:

16:21:45 Rep. Jill Cohenour (D), HD 42, closed the hearing on HB 621.

HEARING ON HB 677 - Generally revise bird hunting season laws related bird dog training

Opening Statement:

16:23:32 Vice Chair Tom France (D), HD 94, opened the hearing on HB 677, Generally revise bird hunting season laws related bird dog training.

Proponent Testimony:

16:28:07 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)
16:29:50 Kevin Farron, Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, (MCBCHA)
16:30:51 Rebecca Boslough-King, Montana Association of Conservation Districts, (MACD)
16:32:07 Hannah Nikonow, Hellgate Hunters and Anglers
16:34:31 Alycia Nathe, Daniels County Conservation District

Opponent Testimony:

16:38:55 Bryce Daviess, Self
16:41:07 Taylor Todd, Self
16:41:37 Rep. Bob Phalen left the meeting.

16:42:30 Emmet Sasser, Self
16:43:05 Rep. Bob Phalen joined the meeting.
16:44:00 Todd Breitenfeldt, Self
16:45:28 Pat Howe, Self
16:47:46 Tara Griffin, Self
16:48:43 John McIltrout, Self
16:51:27 John Junnila, Self
16:54:26 Todd Lehner, Self
16:56:37 Mark Thibeault, Self

Informational Witness Testimony:

16:58:05 Dustin Temple, Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Questions from Committee:

16:58:34 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
16:58:55 Rep. Tom France-D
16:58:57 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
16:59:31 Rep. Tom France-D
17:01:33 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
17:02:19 Rep. Denley Loge left the meeting.
17:02:57 Rep. Edward Butcher
17:04:00 Rep. Tom France-D
17:04:53 Rep. Bob Phalen
17:05:10 Rep. Tom France-D
17:05:41 Rep. Marilyn Marler
17:06:45 Rep. Tom France-D
17:07:39 Rep. Marilyn Marler

17:08:28 Rep. Gary Parry

17:08:56 Rep. Tom France-D

17:09:57 Rep. Gary Parry

17:10:29 Dustin, Temple, FWP

17:11:28 Rep. Bob Phalen

17:12:09 Rep. Tom France-D

17:12:23 Rep. Bob Phalen

17:12:47 Rep. Tom France-D

17:13:44 Rep. Russel Miner

17:13:58 Rep. Tom France-D

17:15:52 Rep. Russel Miner

17:16:13 Taylor Todd

17:16:40 Rep. Russel Miner

17:16:42 Taylor Todd

17:17:04 Rep. Russel Miner

17:17:21 Taylor Todd

17:18:13 Rep. Gary Parry

17:18:41 Dustin Temple, FWP

17:20:16 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf joined the meeting.

17:20:20 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

17:20:52 Rep. Tom France-D

17:20:56 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

17:21:32 Rep. Tom France-D

17:22:46 Rep. Paul Fielder

17:23:04 Rep. Tom France-D

Closing Statement:

17:23:52 Vice Chair Tom France (D), HD 94, closed the hearing on HB 677.

17:33:41 **Reconvened**

18:11:40 Rep. Running Wolf has arrived

18:11:44 Rep. Deming has arrived

18:11:49 Rep. Marler has arrived

18:11:55 Rep. Matthews has arrived

HEARING ON HB 627 - Revise wolf trapping laws

Opening Statement:

17:34:58 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, opened the hearing on HB 627, Revise wolf trapping laws.

Proponent Testimony:

17:40:36 Tom Fieber, Self

17:41:19 Tim McKenrick, Self

17:41:44 Josh Letcher, Self

17:42:18 Terry Zink, Self

17:43:12 Justin Webb, Foundation for Wildlife Management

17:43:49 Larry Rattray, Self

17:44:44 Dwayne Hostetler, Self

Opponent Testimony:

17:49:26 Nick Gevock, Endangered Species Coalition and Bear Creek Council

17:49:38 Steven Capra, Footloose Montana

17:50:21 Marc Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies, (WOR)

17:51:29 Clair Beelman, Footloose Montana

17:52:36 Michael Freeman, Natural Resource Advisor, Governor's Office

17:55:41 Dustin Temple, Fish, Wildlife and Parks

17:56:23 Eric Clewis, Defenders of Wildlife

17:56:47 Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon

17:57:30 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)

[EXHIBIT\(230223FIHa2\)](#)

17:58:47 Jennifer Sherry, Natural Resources Defense Council, (NRDC)

18:00:25 Brooke Shifrin, Greater Yellowstone Coalition

18:01:12 Glenda Meyer, Self

18:02:02 Lisa Robertson, Self

18:02:21 Michaels Stoerger, Self

18:02:48 Dr. Kari Gunderson, Self

18:03:37 Stephanie Naftal, Self

18:04:15 KC York, Trap Free Montana

[EXHIBIT\(230223FIHa3\)](#)

18:05:31 Lance Fourstar, Montana American Indian Caucus

Questions from Committee:

18:06:08 Rep. Edward Butcher

18:06:23 Dustin Temple, FWP

18:06:44 Quentin Kujala, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

18:08:02 Vice Chair Tom France

18:08:21 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:08:31 Vice Chair Tom France
18:08:43 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:08:59 Rep. Gary Parry
18:09:13 Steven Capra. Footloose Montana
18:10:01 Rep. Gary Parry
18:10:10 Steven Capra. Footloose Montana
18:10:23 Rep. Bob Phalen
18:10:55 Rep. Paul Fielder-R
18:12:52 Rep. Bob Phalen
18:12:59 Rep. Paul Fielder-R
18:13:28 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
18:14:21 Rep. Paul Fielder-R
18:15:20 Rep. Edward Butcher
18:16:01 Steven Capra. Footloose Montana
18:17:37 Rep. Denise Baum
18:18:05 Dustin Temple, FWP
18:19:14 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
18:20:20 Dustin Temple, FWP
18:21:38 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
18:22:05 Terry Zink

Closing Statement:

18:23:47 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, closed the hearing on HB 627.

HEARING ON HB 628 - Revise wolf trapping laws

Opening Statement:

18:28:08 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, opened the hearing on HB 628, Revise wolf trapping laws.

Proponent Testimony:

18:31:37 Tim McKenrick, Self

18:32:00 Justin Webb, Foundation for Wildlife Management

18:32:44 Josh Letcher, Self

18:34:32 Terry Zink, Self

18:35:54 Dwayne Hostetler, Self

Opponent Testimony:

18:36:23 Nick Gevock, Endangered Species Coalition and Bear Creek Council

18:37:25 Marc Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies, (WOR)

18:40:14 Steven Capra, Footloose Montana

18:41:40 Mike Freeman, Natural Resource Advisor, Governor's Office

18:42:17 Dustin Temple, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

18:43:35 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)

18:44:49 Eric Clewis, Defenders of Wildlife

18:45:06 Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon

18:45:46 Clare Beelman, Footloose Montana

18:47:23 Lance Fourstar, Montana Indian Caucus

18:48:06 KC York, Trap Free Montana

18:49:36 Brooke Shifrin, Greater Yellowstone Coalition

18:50:24 Glenda Meyer, Self

18:51:08 Jennifer Sherry, Natural Resources Defense Council, (NRDC)

18:52:05 Michael Stoerger, Self
18:52:47 Dr Kari Gunderson, Self
18:53:46 Lisa Robertson, Self

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

18:54:50 Rep. Edward Butcher
18:54:54 Amy Seaman, MT Audubon
18:55:51 Rep. Denley Loge
18:56:04 Quentin Kujala, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)
18:56:32 Rep. Denley Loge
18:56:34 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:56:44 Rep. Denley Loge
18:56:48 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:57:36 Rep. Bob Phalen
18:57:46 Rep. Paul Fielder-R
18:58:03 Rep. Bob Phalen
18:58:04 Rep. Paul Fielder-R
18:58:10 Rep. Bob Phalen
18:58:36 Steven Capra, Footloose Montana
18:59:21 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
18:59:55 Dwayne Hostetler
19:00:11 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
19:00:35 Justin Webb, Foundation for Wildlife Management
19:01:01 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

19:01:02 Justin Webb, Foundation for Wildlife Management
19:01:24 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
19:01:44 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:01:55 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
19:02:01 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:02:11 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
19:02:25 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:03:08 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:03:23 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:04:18 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:04:21 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:04:32 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:04:36 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:04:51 Rep. Marilyn Marler
19:05:52 Quentin Kujala, FWP
19:07:07 Rep. Lee Deming
19:08:11 Dustin Temple, FWP
19:08:38 Rep. Lee Deming
19:09:25 Dustin Temple, FWP

Closing Statement:

19:09:50 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, closed the hearing on HB 628.

HEARING ON HB 630 - Revise black bear hunting laws

Opening Statement:

19:13:29 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, opened the hearing on HB 630, Revise black bear hunting laws.

Proponent Testimony:

19:15:43 Terry Zink, Self

19:15:59 Dwayne Hostetler, Self

19:19:23 Stacy Barch, Montana State Houndsmen Association, (MSHA)

Opponent Testimony:

19:20:45 Steven Capra, Footloose Montana

19:21:52 Marc Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies, (WOR)

19:24:06 Nick Gevock, Endangered Species Coalition and Black Creek Council

19:25:11 Mike Freeman, Natural Resource Advisor, Governor's Office

19:25:56 Dustin Temple, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

19:27:00 Ben Lamb, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)

19:28:28 Eric Clewis, Defenders of Wildlife

19:28:45 Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon

19:29:20 KC York, Trap Free Montana

19:29:47 Derek Goldman, Endangered Species Coalition

19:30:39 Lisa Robertson, Self

19:31:30 Dr. Kari Gunderson, Self

19:31:57 Michael Stoerger, Self

19:32:17 Glenda Meyer, Self

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

19:33:58 Rep. Jonathan Karlen

19:34:13 Mike Freeman, Natural Resources Advisor, Governor's Office
19:34:34 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:34:49 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:34:52 Mike Freeman, Natural Resources Advisor, Governor's Office
19:35:14 Rep. Jonathan Karlen
19:35:20 Dustin Temple, FWP
19:35:45 Rep. Edward Butcher
19:36:21 Terry Zink
19:38:05 Rep. Edward Butcher
19:38:17 Terry Zink
19:38:31 Vice Chair Tom France
19:39:13 Rep. Paul Fielder-R

Closing Statement:

19:40:16 Rep. Paul Fielder (R), HD 13, closed the hearing on HB 630.

20:04:26 **Recessed**

20:04:33 **Reconvened**

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 522 - Provide landowner preference bison tags for landowners near YNP

20:04:41 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 522 DO PASS.**

Discussion:

20:11:05 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
20:11:06 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
20:11:10 Rep. Marilyn Marler
20:11:12 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
20:11:35 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

20:12:20 Rep. Denley Loge
20:12:46 Rep. Eric Matthews
20:13:09 Vice Chair Tom France
20:13:54 Rep. Edward Butcher
20:15:47 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
20:15:54 **Motion:** Rep. Tyson Running Wolf moved that **HB 522 BE AMENDED.**
12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
20:17:15 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 522 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**
12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 548 - Revise penalties for criminal trespass while collecting antlers/sheds/horns

20:21:07 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 548 DO PASS.**
20:21:23 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 548 BE AMENDED.**
Discussion:
20:22:04 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
20:24:14 Rep. Denley Loge
20:24:57 Rep. Tanner Smith
20:25:12 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
20:26:22 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 548 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**
12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried 15 - 4 by roll call vote with Rep. Fielder, Rep. Hinkle, Rep. Ler, Rep. Phalen, voting no.
Rep. Ler, By Proxy

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 596 - Revise elk hunting access agreement licenses

20:28:27 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 596 DO PASS.**
20:28:44 **Motion:** Rep. Denley Loge moved that **HB 596 BE AMENDED.**
12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
20:30:03 **Motion:** Rep. Denley Loge moved that **HB 596 BE AMENDED.**

12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

20:31:22 **Motion:** Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle moved that **HB 596 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

12:10:51 **Vote:** Motion carried 13 - 6 by roll call vote with Rep. Baum, Rep. France, Rep. Karlen, Rep. Marler, Rep. Matthews, Rep. Running Wolf, voting no.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 20:34:13

LJ Jennings, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230223FIHaad\)](#)