

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

**Call to Order:** Chair Paul Fielder-R, on February 24, 2023 at 8:02 AM, in 152

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Rep. Paul Fielder, Chair (R)  
Rep. Mark Thane, Vice Chair (D)  
Rep. Tom Welch, Vice Chair (R)  
Rep. Larry Brewster (R)  
Rep. Jill Cohenour (D)  
Rep. Sherry Essmann (R)  
Rep. Dave Fern (D)  
Rep. Marty Malone (R)  
Rep. Marilyn Marler (D)  
Rep. Russel Miner (R)  
Rep. George Nikolakakos (R)  
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)  
Rep. Tanner Smith (R)  
Rep. Sue Vinton (R)

**Members Excused:** Rep. Kim Abbott (D)  
Rep. Brad Barker (R)  
Rep. Alice Buckley (D)  
Rep. Edward Butcher (R)  
Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R)  
Rep. Scot Kerns (R)  
Rep. Rhonda Knudsen (R)

**Staff Present:** Brigitte Bellefleur, Secretary  
Megan Moore, Research Analyst

**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 542 02/17/2023

HB 546 02/17/2023

Executive Action:

HB 481 DO PASS AS AMENDED  
HB 497 DO PASS  
HB 508 TO TABLE  
HB 530 DO PASS

**HEARING ON HB 542 - Establish a volunteer firefighter and EMT tax credit**

**Opening Statement:**

08:05:34 Rep. Ron Marshall (R), HD 87, opened the hearing on HB 542, Establish a volunteer firefighter and EMT tax credit.

**Proponent Testimony:**

08:09:10 Ron Miller, First Responder, Victor

08:10:28 Rich Cowger, Montana Fire Alliance (MFA) and Fire District Trustees (FDT)

08:12:43 Nicole Miller, First Responder, Victor

08:14:49 Eric Perez, First Responder, Victor

08:16:18 BJ Klose, Dillon Volunteer Fire Department

08:18:47 Ed Shindoll, Fire Chief, Broadwater Rural Fire District

08:20:35 Brigitte Bellefleur, Self

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

08:21:15 Aaron McNay, Department of Revenue (DOR)

08:21:34 Jake Ford, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

08:22:24 Rep. Sue Vinton

08:22:46 Rep. Ron Marshall-R

08:23:02 Jake Ford, DOR

08:23:31 Rep. Russel Miner

08:23:47 Aaron McNay, DOR

08:24:16 Rep. Russel Miner

08:24:25 Aaron McNay, DOR

08:25:18 Rep. Russel Miner  
08:25:24 Aaron McNay, DOR  
08:25:55 Rep. Dave Fern  
08:26:00 Rep. Ron Marshall-R  
08:27:29 Rep. Jill Cohenour  
08:27:40 Rich Cowger, MFA and FDT

**Closing Statement:**

08:30:25 Rep. Ron Marshall (R), HD 87, closed the hearing on HB 542.

**HEARING ON HB 546 - Authorize additional funding for coal trust loan program for housing**

**Opening Statement:**

08:32:05 Rep. Dave Fern (D), HD 5, opened the hearing on HB 546, Authorize additional funding for coal trust loan program for housing.

**Proponent Testimony:**

08:37:19 Andrea Davis, Chair, Montana Housing Coalition  
08:41:21 Becki Brandborg, Affordable Housing Developer  
08:45:32 Dave Galt, Montana Chamber of Commerce  
08:46:00 Margie MacDonald, Big Sky 55 Plus  
08:47:36 Jake Brown, Shelter Whitefish  
08:48:08 Ann Schwend, Montana Environmental Information Center  
08:48:44 Al Ekblad, Operating Engineers Local 546  
08:49:58 John Forkan, Montana Building and Construction Trade Council  
08:50:38 Madison Grady, Montana Association of Realtors (MAR)  
08:51:07 Mellissa Shannon, Montana Housing Coalition

08:51:54 Dan Brooks, Billings Chamber of Commerce  
08:53:40 Robyn Morrison, League of Women Voters  
08:54:34 Kaia Peterson, Neighbor Works Montana  
08:55:57 Erica Wirtala, Northwest Montana Association of Realtors  
08:57:34 Shyla Patera, North Central Independent Living Services  
08:59:10 Emily Harris-Shears, City of Missoula

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:00:30 Cheryl Cohen, Montana Board of Housing (MBH)  
09:00:41 Dan Villa, Montana Board of Investments (MBI)  
[EXHIBIT\(230224TAHa1\)](#)  
09:01:11 Sam Schaefer, Legislative Fiscal Division (LFD)

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

None

**Questions from Committee:**

09:02:07 Rep. Marty Malone  
09:02:11 Rep. Dave Fern-D  
09:03:35 Rep. Tanner Smith  
09:04:09 Rep. Dave Fern-D  
09:04:33 Cheryl Cohen, MBH  
09:04:55 Vice Chair Mark Thane  
09:05:11 Dan Villa, MBI  
09:07:39 Vice Chair Tom Welch  
09:07:57 Rep. Dave Fern-D

09:08:42 Dan Villa, MBI  
09:09:17 Rep. Sherry Essmann  
09:09:54 Rep. Dave Fern-D  
09:10:21 Rep. Jill Cohenour  
09:10:36 Rep. Dave Fern-D

**Closing Statement:**

09:12:43 Rep. Dave Fern (D), HD 5, closed the hearing on HB 546.

09:15:02 **Recessed**

09:45:15 **Reconvened**

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 481 - Increase rate of inflation limit for calculating property tax levies**

09:45:36 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tom Welch moved that **HB 481 DO PASS.**

09:46:14 **Motion:** Rep. Josh Kassmier that **HB 481 BE AMENDED.**

**Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

09:47:28 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tom Welch moved that **HB 481 DO PASS AS AMENDED.**

**Vote:** Motion carried 13 - 8 by voice vote with Rep. Brewster, Rep. Butcher, Rep. Essmann, Rep. Fielder, Rep. Kerns, Rep. Knudsen, Rep. Smith, Rep. Vinton, voting no.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 497 - Require property tax bill to include comparison with prior year**

09:50:53 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tom Welch moved that **HB 497 DO PASS.**

**Vote:** Motion carried 20 - 1 by voice vote with Rep. Malone, voting no.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 508 - Allow option to vote in school district elections**

09:52:25 **Motion:** Vice Chair Tom Welch moved that **HB 508 DO PASS.**

**Substitute Motion:** Vice Chair Mark Thane moved that **HB 508 BE TABLED.**

**Vote:** Substitute Motion carried 12 - 9 by roll call vote with Rep. Brewster, Rep. Butcher, Rep. Essmann, Rep. Fielder, Rep. Kerns, Rep. Knudsen, Rep. Nikolakakos, Rep. Smith, Rep. Vinton, voting no.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 530 - Revise port authority mill levies**

09:54:37      **Motion:** Vice Chair Tom Welch moved that **HB 530 DO PASS.**

**Discussion:**

09:55:14      Rep. Butcher

**Vote:** Motion carried 11 - 10 by voice vote with Rep. Brewster, Rep. Butcher, Rep. Essmann, Rep. Fielder, Rep. Kerns, Rep. Knudsen, Rep. Marler, Rep. Miner, Rep. Smith, Rep. Welch, voting no.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 10:19:24

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Brigitte Bellefleur, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230224TAHaad\)](#)