

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

Call to Order: Chair Ross Fitzgerald-R, on March 23, 2023 at 2:42 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. Lee Deming (R)
Rep. Neil Duram (R)
Rep. Paul Fielder (R)
Rep. Jonathan Karlen (D)
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)
Rep. Denley Loge (R)
Rep. Marilyn Marler (D)
Rep. Russel Miner (R)
Rep. Gary Parry (R)
Rep. Bob Phalen (R)
Rep. Tyson Running Wolf (D)

Members Excused: Rep. Eric Matthews (D)
Rep. Tanner Smith (R)
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 826 03/16/2023
SB 324 03/16/2023
SB 356 03/16/2023
SJ 14 03/15/2023

HB 843 03/20/2023

Executive Action:

14:44:38 Rep. Smith has arrived
15:41:37 Rep. Baum has left
15:42:29 Rep. Parry has left
15:42:35 Rep. Phalen has left
15:43:09 Rep. Loge has left

HEARING ON HB 826 - Phase out prison pheasant program

Opening Statement:

14:44:27 Rep. Marilyn Marler (D), HD 90, opened the hearing on HB 826, Phase out prison pheasant program.

Proponent Testimony:

14:53:22 Ben Deeble, Big Sky Upland Bird Association, (BSUBA)
[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa1\)](#)
14:57:21 Matt Leow, Montana Chapter of Back Country Hunters and Anglers
14:59:14 Marcus Strange, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)
15:00:43 Jeff Herbert, Montana Sportsmen Alliance, (MSA)

Opponent Testimony:

15:04:12 Deb O'Neill, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)
15:10:55 Steve Gunderson, Representative, HD 1
15:15:07 Mike Lang, Senator, SD 17
15:17:42 Scott Eychner, Montana Department of Corrections, (DOC)

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

15:19:12 Rep. Russel Miner
15:19:43 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:20:10 Rep. Russel Miner
15:20:23 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:20:33 Rep. Russel Miner
15:20:54 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:21:17 Rep. Tanner Smith
15:22:00 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:22:43 Rep. Edward Butcher
15:23:45 Rep. Marilyn Marler-D
15:24:21 Rep. Edward Butcher
15:24:33 Rep. Marilyn Marler-D
15:24:50 Rep. Edward Butcher
15:25:16 Rep. Denise Baum
15:25:33 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
15:25:35 Rep. Marilyn Marler-D
15:26:02 Rep. Bob Phalen
15:26:16 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:26:21 Vice Chair Tom France
15:26:47 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:26:53 Vice Chair Tom France
15:27:07 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:27:15 Vice Chair Tom France
15:27:22 Scott Eychner, DOC

15:27:55 Vice Chair Tom France

15:28:09 Scott Eychner, DOC

15:28:32 Vice Chair Tom France

15:28:54 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:29:00 Vice Chair Tom France

15:29:04 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:29:09 Vice Chair Tom France

15:29:17 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:29:27 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle

15:30:25 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:31:29 Rep. Edward Butcher

15:32:15 Scott Eychner, DOC

15:32:57 Rep. Edward Butcher

15:33:12 Scott Eychner, DOC

15:33:20 Rep. Edward Butcher

15:33:37 Deb O'Neill, FWP

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa2\)](#)

15:35:33 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:36:00 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:36:05 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:36:10 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:36:15 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:37:08 Deb O'Neill, FWP

15:37:22 Rep. Paul Fielder

15:37:44 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:38:28 Rep. Neil Duram
15:38:51 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:39:28 Rep. Neil Duram
15:39:49 Scott Eychner, DOC
15:39:58 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:40:09 Rep. Neil Duram
15:40:21 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:40:48 Rep. Gary Parry
15:41:13 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:42:18 Rep. Edward Butcher
15:42:49 Deb O'Neill, FWP
15:42:54 Rep. Edward Butcher
15:43:02 Deb O'Neill, FWP

Closing Statement:

15:43:23 Rep. Marilyn Marler (D), HD 90, closed the hearing on HB 826.

15:43:40 Rep. Karlen has left
15:44:16 Rep. Duram has left
15:46:32 Rep. Marler has left

**HEARING ON SJ 14 - Resolution opposing bison introduction at Charles M. Russell
Wildlife Refuge**

Opening Statement:

15:47:23 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, opened the hearing on SJ 14, Resolution opposing bison introduction at Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge.

Discussion:

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa3\)](#)

Proponent Testimony:

- 15:53:43 Richard Dunbar, Philips County Commissioner
[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa4\)](#)
- 15:56:04 Richard Dunbar, Philips County Commissioner
[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa5\)](#)
- 15:56:47 Shelby Demars, United Property Owners of Montana, (UPOM)
- 15:59:15 Ross Butcher, Fergus County Commissioner
- 16:01:07 Callie Michaels, Montana Wool Growers Association, (MWGA)
[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa6\)](#)
- 16:04:49 Steve Wanderaas, Montana Association of Conservation Districts, (MACD)
- 16:05:37 Brawna Willmore, Self
- 16:06:38 Nicole Rolf, Montana Farm Bureau Federation, (MFBF)
- 16:07:23 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stockgrowers Association, (MSA), Montana Cattle Women, (MCW), Montana Public Lands Council, (MPLC), Montana Association of State Grazing Districts, (MASGD)
- 16:08:29 Steve Hinebauch, Senator, SD 18
- 16:10:01 Bob Gilbert, Philips County

Opponent Testimony:

- 16:12:01 Lance Fourstar, American Indian Caucus, (AIC)
[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa7\)](#)
- 16:14:23 Patrick Yawakie, Blackfeet Tribe
- 16:17:04 Jason Belcourt, Rocky Way Indian Reservation
- 16:21:13 Chamois Andersen, Defenders of Wildlife

16:28:09 Nick Gevock, Endangered Species Coalition, (ESC) and Bear Creek Council, (BCC)

16:31:13 Peter Dudley, Montana Audubon

16:32:40 Marcus Strange, Montana Wildlife Federation, (MWF)

16:33:03 Matt Leow, Montana Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

16:34:07 Shana Drimal, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, (GYC)

16:38:57 Darrell Geist, Buffalo Field Campaign

16:41:25 Philip Knight, Montana Chapter of the Sierra Club

16:43:55 Josh Osher, Western Watersheds Project

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

16:45:57 Vice Chair Tom France

16:46:30 Sen. Mike Lang-R

16:47:35 Vice Chair Tom France

16:48:23 Sen. Mike Lang-R

16:49:45 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle

16:51:03 Raylee Honeycutt, MSGA

16:51:25 Rep. Paul Fielder

16:52:01 Sen. Mike Lang-R

16:52:43 Rep. Paul Fielder

16:53:06 Sen. Mike Lang-R

16:54:42 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

16:55:01 Callie Michaels, MWGA

16:55:31 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf

16:55:39 Callie Michaels, MWGA
16:55:53 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
16:55:58 Callie Michaels, MWGA
16:56:23 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
16:56:55 Sen. Steve Hinebauch, SD 18
16:57:06 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
16:57:48 Sen. Mike Lang-R
16:58:22 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
16:58:35 Sen. Mike Lang-R
16:58:41 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
16:58:51 Sen. Mike Lang-R
16:59:32 Rep. Tyson Running Wolf
17:00:11 Sen. Mike Lang-R
17:00:38 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
17:01:16 Vice Chair Tom France
17:01:49 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
17:02:25 Callie Michaels, MWGA
17:05:29 Rep. Tanner Smith joined the meeting.
17:05:32 Rep. Tanner Smith
17:05:46 Callie Michaels, MWGA
17:05:59 Vice Chair Tom France
17:06:40 Callie Michaels, MWGA

Closing Statement:

17:07:26 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, closed the hearing on SJ 14.

17:07:52 Rep. Ler has left

HEARING ON SB 324 - Revise FWP information disclosure laws

Opening Statement:

17:16:33 Sen. Bob Brown (R), SD 7, opened the hearing on SB 324, Revise FWP information disclosure laws.

Proponent Testimony:

17:18:10 Jeff Darrah, Montana Sportsman for Fish and Wildlife

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa8\)](#)

17:20:07 Mac Minard, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, (MOGA)

17:21:31 Ed Hebbe, Montana Trappers Association, (MTA)

17:23:32 Pat Bauer, Southwest Montana Chapter of Safari Club International

17:24:16 Chris Morgan, Montana Trappers Association, (MTA)

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa9\)](#)

17:26:14 Kris Killorn, Outdoor Heritage Coalition

17:27:14 Tim McKenrick, Montana Trappers Association, District 3

17:28:24 Michael McKenrick, Self

17:28:47 Ross Morgan, Rocky Mountain Stock Growers Association, (RMSGGA)

17:29:43 David Walrod, Self

17:30:56 Keith Kubista, Self

Opponent Testimony:

17:32:29 Marc Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies, (WOR)

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa10\)](#)

17:36:33 KC York, Trap Free Montana Public Lands

Informational Witness Testimony:

17:40:57 Quentin Kujala, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

17:41:24 Rep. Russel Miner
17:41:37 Marc Cooke, WoR
17:41:52 Rep. Russel Miner
17:41:55 Marc Cooke, WoR
17:42:09 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
17:42:48 Quentin Kujala, FWP
17:43:26 Vice Chair Jedediah Hinkle
17:43:37 Quentin Kujala, FWP
17:44:11 Vice Chair Tom France
17:44:49 Quentin Kujala, FWP
17:45:06 Vice Chair Tom France
17:45:24 Quentin Kujala, FWP
17:46:01 Vice Chair Tom France
17:46:17 Quentin Kujala, FWP
17:46:30 Rep. Edward Butcher

Closing Statement:

17:47:22 Sen. Bob Brown (R), SD 7, closed the hearing on SB 324.

Discussion:

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa11\)](#)

HEARING ON HB 843 - Free hunting/fishing for service members/veterans with 50% disability rating

Opening Statement:

17:51:03 Rep. Scot Kerns (R), HD 23, opened the hearing on HB 843, Free hunting/fishing for service members/veterans with 50% disability rating.

Discussion:

[EXHIBIT\(230323FIHa12\)](#)

Proponent Testimony:

17:53:37 Pat Bauer, Southwest Montana Chapter of Safari Club International
17:54:57 Tim McKenrick, Self
17:55:42 Michael McKenrick, Self

Opponent Testimony:

17:56:57 Colin Cooney, Montana Trout Unlimited, (MTU)

Informational Witness Testimony:

17:58:23 Quentin Kujala, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

17:58:44 Rep. Russel Miner
17:59:28 Rep. Scot Kerns-R
17:59:31 Rep. Russel Miner
18:00:17 Rep. Scot Kerns-R
18:00:18 Rep. Russel Miner
18:00:22 Rep. Scot Kerns-R
18:00:37 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
18:00:55 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:01:44 Chair Ross Fitzgerald
18:01:45 Quentin Kujala, FWP
18:01:49 Rep. Paul Fielder

Closing Statement:

18:02:14 Rep. Scot Kerns (R), HD 23, closed the hearing on HB 843.

HEARING ON SB 356 - Require notification to sheriff of game check stations

Opening Statement:

18:05:07 Sen. Steve Hinebauch (R), SD 18, opened the hearing on SB 356,
Require notification to sheriff of game check stations.

Proponent Testimony:

18:07:51 Tim McKenrick, Self

18:08:59 Michael McKenrick, Self

18:09:18 Pat Bauer, Self

18:10:22 Kris Killorn, Self

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

18:11:05 Phil Kilbreath, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, (FWP)

Questions from Committee:

18:11:37 Vice Chair Tom France

18:12:02 Phil Kilbreath, FWP

Closing Statement:

18:12:27 Sen. Steve Hinebauch (R), SD 18, closed the hearing on SB 356.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 18:14:15

LJ Jennings, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230323FIHaad\)](#)