

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

Call to Order: Chair Joshua Kassmier-R, on March 30, 2023 at 3:03 PM, in 137

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Rep. Joshua Kassmier, Chair (R)
Rep. Dave Fern, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. Fred Anderson (R)
Rep. Brad Barker (R)
Rep. James Bergstrom (R)
Rep. Tony Brockman (R)
Rep. Bob Carter (D)
Rep. Julie Dooling (R)
Rep. Greg Kmetz (R)
Rep. Melissa Romano (D)
Rep. Frank Smith (D)
Rep. Katie Sullivan (D)
Rep. Kenneth Walsh (R)
Rep. Marvin Weatherwax (D)
Rep. Zack Wirth (R)

Members Excused: Rep. Paul Green (R)
Rep. Casey Knudsen (R)
Rep. Marty Malone (R)
Rep. Braxton Mitchell (R)

Staff Present: Andria Hardin, Research Analyst
Rose Harmon, Secretary
Loran Nelson, 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 966 03/30/2023
SB 462 03/27/2023
SJ 13 03/27/2023

Executive Action:

HB 966 TO TABLE

HEARING ON SB 462 - Prioritize ag irrigation in RRGL

Opening Statement:

15:04:33 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, opened the hearing on SB 462, Prioritize ag irrigation in RRGL.

Proponent Testimony:

15:06:41 Mike Murphy, Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA)

15:09:09 Rep. Julie Dooling left the meeting.

15:11:02 Rachel Cone, Montana Farm Bureau Federation, Proxy proponent provided by Mike Murphy

15:11:21 Scott Aspenlieder, President, Montana Water Resources Association (MWRA), Private Engineering Consultant

15:15:28 Shawn Higley, Consulting Engineer

15:17:29 Garrett Hanson, Manager, Helena Valley Irrigation District (HVID)

15:18:31 Mark Deiehl, Helena Valley Irrigation District

15:20:35 Rep. Casey Knudsen joined the meeting.

15:21:58 Rachel Prevost, Montana Farmer's Union

15:22:28 James Brower, Manager, Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project

15:24:32 Vice Chair Marty Malone left the meeting.

15:29:18 Cole Peebles, Manager, Pondera County Canal and Reservoir Company

15:31:43 Vice Chair Dave Fern left the meeting.

15:33:31 Erling Juel, Gen Manager, Greenfields Irrigation District

15:34:35 Rep. Brad Barker left the meeting.

15:35:11 Rep. Brad Barker joined the meeting.

15:36:19 Rep. Kenneth Walsh left the meeting.

15:37:06 Vice Chair Dave Fern joined the meeting.

Opponent Testimony:

15:38:46 Steve Wade, Montana Rural Water Systems

15:40:18 Rep. Fred Anderson left the meeting.

15:40:48 Thomas Jodoin, Deputy Director and Legal Counsel, Montana League of Cities and Towns, Proxy Opponent provided by Steve Wade.

Informational Witness Testimony:

15:41:16 Mark Bostrom, Administrator, Conservation and Resource Development Division, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

[EXHIBIT\(230330AGHa1\)](#)

15:42:07 Lindsey Volpe, Manager, Renewable Resources Grant and Loan Program (RRGLP), Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

Questions from Committee:

15:42:40 Rep. Brad Barker

15:43:20 Sen. Mike Lang-R

15:43:28 Rep. Kenneth Walsh joined the meeting.

15:45:45 Rep. James Bergstrom

15:46:39 Lindsey Volpe, RRGLP

15:47:22 Rep. James Bergstrom

15:47:33 Lindsey Volpe, RRGLP

15:47:50 Mark Bostrom, DNRC

15:49:02 Rep. Julie Dooling-R joined the meeting

15:49:38 Rep. Greg Kmetz

15:50:42 Scott Aspenlieder, MWRA

15:52:15 Rep. Fred Anderson joined the meeting.

15:52:27 Rep. Kenneth Walsh
15:52:47 Mark Bostrom, DNRC
15:55:10 Rep. James Bergstrom
15:56:11 Garrett Hanson, HVID
15:57:09 Vice Chair Dave Fern
15:57:54 Mark Bostrom, DNRC

Closing Statement:

16:01:27 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, closed the hearing on SB 462.

HEARING ON SJ 13 - Resolution for rangeland appreciation month

Opening Statement:

16:02:37 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, opened the hearing on SJ 13, Resolution for rangeland appreciation month.

Discussion:

16:04:16 Rep. Marvin Weatherwax left the meeting.
16:04:29 Rep. Brad Barker left the meeting.

Proponent Testimony:

16:05:07 Rachel Prevost, Montana Farmer's Union
16:05:36 Mike Murphy, Montana Water Resources Association
16:06:17 Walter Schweitzer, President, Montana Farmer's Union

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

16:07:38 Rep. Bob Carter

16:07:49 Rep. Brad Barker joined the meeting.
16:07:50 Sen. Mike Lang-R
16:07:58 Vice Chair Marty Malone joined the meeting.

Closing Statement:

16:08:17 Sen. Mike Lang (R), SD 17, closed the hearing on SJ 13.

HEARING ON HB 966 - Providing agricultural data collection protections

Opening Statement:

16:09:35 Rep. Katie Sullivan (D), HD 89, opened the hearing on HB 966, Providing agricultural data collection protections.

Discussion:

15:37:30 Chair Kassmier turned the gavel over to Vice Chair Fern and left the meeting.
16:13:20 Chair Joshua Kassmier-R joined the meeting

Proponent Testimony:

16:14:37 Rachel Prevost, Montana Farmer's Union

[EXHIBIT\(230330AGHa2\)](#)

16:16:06 Rachel Prevost, Montana Farmer's Union

[EXHIBIT\(230330AGHa3\)](#)

16:17:00 Walter Schweitzer, President, Montana Farmer's Union (MFU)

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

16:23:37 Rep. Bob Carter

16:24:13 Walter Schweitzer, MFU
16:26:34 Rep. Kenneth Walsh
16:27:47 Walter Schweitzer, MFU
16:30:19 Rep. James Bergstrom
16:30:35 Rep. Kenneth Walsh left the meeting.
16:31:13 Walter Schweitzer, MFU
16:32:15 Vice Chair Marty Malone
16:32:43 Rep. Katie Sullivan-D
16:36:29 Rep. Julie Dooling
16:36:52 Rep. Kenneth Walsh joined the meeting.
16:37:13 Rep. Katie Sullivan-D
16:39:17 Rep. Kenneth Walsh
16:39:50 Rep. Katie Sullivan-D
16:40:44 Rep. James Bergstrom
16:41:19 Rep. Katie Sullivan-D
16:42:17 Vice Chair Marty Malone
16:42:31 Rep. Katie Sullivan-D
16:44:10 Andria Hardin

Closing Statement:

16:44:34 Rep. Katie Sullivan (D), HD 89, closed the hearing on HB 966.

Discussion:

16:46:06 Chair Kassmier resumed possession of the gavel.

16:45:56 **Recessed**

16:51:40 **Reconvened**

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 966 - Providing agricultural data collection protections

16:51:52 **Motion:** Rep. Katie Sullivan moved that **HB 966 DO PASS.**

Discussion:

16:52:05 Rep. Kenneth Walsh

16:52:32 Rep. Bob Carter

16:53:44 Rep. Katie Sullivan

16:53:59 Vice Chair Dave Fern

16:54:37 Rep. Greg Kmetz

16:55:11 Rep. Frank Smith

16:55:53 Vice Chair Marty Malone

16:56:20 Rep. Marvin Weatherwax-D joined the meeting.

16:56:58 **Vote:** Motion failed 10 - 8 by roll call vote with Rep. Anderson, Rep. Bergstrom, Rep. Carter, Rep. Fern, Rep. Romano, Rep. Smith, Rep. Sullivan, Rep. Weatherwax, voting yes.

16:58:38 **Motion:** Rep. Bob Carter moved that **HB 966 TO TABLE.**

16:58:58 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 17:00:55

Rose Harmon, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230330AGHaad\)](#)