

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA SENATE**  
**68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**  
**COMMITTEE ON (S) BUSINESS, LABOR, AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

**Call to Order:** Chair Jason Small-R, on March 20, 2023 at 8:00 AM, in 422

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Sen. Jason Small, Chair (R)  
Sen. Willis Curdy, Vice Chair (D)  
Sen. Mark Noland, Vice Chair (R)  
Sen. Mike Fox (D)  
Sen. Bruce Gillespie (R)  
Sen. Christopher Pope (D)  
Sen. Walt Sales (R)  
Sen. Terry Vermeire (R)

**Members Excused:** Sen. Jason Ellsworth (R)  
Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick (R)

**Staff Present:** Lynnette Sena, Secretary  
Erin Sullivan, 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 351 03/15/2023  
HB 539 03/15/2023  
HB 578 03/15/2023  
HB 579 03/15/2023  
HB 611 03/15/2023  
HB 771 03/15/2023  
HB 783 03/15/2023

Executive Action:

**HEARING ON HB 351 - Generally revise marijuana laws**

**Opening Statement:**

08:01:11 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R), HD 43, opened the hearing on HB 351, Generally revise marijuana laws.

**Discussion:**

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa1\)](#)

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa2\)](#)

**Proponent Testimony:**

08:08:01 Coleen Smith, Executive Director, Youth Connections

**Opponent Testimony:**

08:11:05 Pepper Peterson, Montana Marijuana Guild

08:16:13 Jim Strauss, Montana Newspaper Association (MNA)

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa3\)](#)

08:19:32 Erica Yakawich, Montana Newspaper Association (MNA)

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa4\)](#)

08:23:59 Jennifer Hensley, Fidelity Diagnostics

08:28:05 Kate Cholewa, Montana Cannabis Association

08:32:22 Erin Bolster, self

08:35:49 Antonette Lininger, self

08:39:36 Nathan Pierce, self

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

08:43:46 Kristan Barbour, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

08:44:19 Vice Chair Willis Curdy  
08:46:55 Kristan Barbour, DOR  
08:48:25 Vice Chair Mark Noland  
08:51:31 Kristan Barbour, DOR  
08:52:35 Sen. Christopher Pope  
08:54:22 Kristan Barbour, DOR  
08:55:10 Sen. Bruce Gillespie  
08:56:37 Jim Strauss, MNA  
08:58:31 Sen. Bruce Gillespie  
09:01:29 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe-R  
09:02:26 Sen. Terry Vermeire  
09:04:34 Kristan Barbour, DOR  
09:05:29 Vice Chair Mark Noland  
09:05:42 Kristan Barbour, DOR  
09:06:22 Vice Chair Mark Noland

**Closing Statement:**

09:07:52 Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R), HD 43, closed the hearing on HB 351.

**HEARING ON HB 578 - Generally revise laws alcohol laws related to special permits**

**Opening Statement:**

09:14:21 Rep. Tony Brockman (R), HD 9, opened the hearing on HB 578,  
Generally revise laws alcohol laws related to special permits.

**Proponent Testimony:**

09:15:30 Jennifer Hensley, Montana Distillers Guild (MDG)  
09:19:01 Debra Pitassy, Montana Beer and Wine Distributers Association (MBWDA)

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:19:58 Steve Swanson, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

09:20:21 Chair Jason Small  
09:21:27 Jennifer Hensley, MDG  
09:22:11 Sen. Walt Sales  
09:23:33 Jennifer Hensley, MDG  
09:23:59 Steve Swanson, DOR  
09:24:12 Sen. Walt Sales  
09:25:15 Steve Swanson, DOR  
09:25:27 Sen. Walt Sales  
09:26:49 Jennifer Hensley, MDG  
09:27:05 Vice Chair Willis Curdy  
09:28:55 Steve Swanson, DOR  
09:29:40 Chair Jason Small  
09:30:41 Steve Swanson, DOR  
09:31:08 Sen. Mike Fox  
09:31:29 Jennifer Hensley, MDG  
09:32:54 Sen. Mike Fox

**Closing Statement:**

09:33:14 Rep. Tony Brockman (R), HD 9, closed the hearing on HB 578.

**Opening Statement:**

09:34:07 Rep. Edward Buttrey (R), HD 21, opened the hearing on HB 771,  
Generally revise alcohol law relating to self-service.

**Proponent Testimony:**

09:38:40 Shauna Helfert, Montana Gaming Association (MGA)

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa5\)](#)

09:43:02 Brad Griffin, Montana Restaurant Association (MRA)

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa6\)](#)

09:44:09 Michael Lawlor, self

**Opponent Testimony:**

09:46:39 Coleen Smith, Youth Connections

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

09:47:45 Becky Schlauch, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

09:48:08 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

09:48:46 Shana Helfert, MGA

09:49:34 Sen. Walt Sales

09:50:15 Rep. Edward Buttrey-R

09:51:31 Sen. Walt Sales

09:53:09 Becky Schlauch, DOR

09:53:38 Vice Chair Mark Noland

09:54:07 Rep. Edward Buttrey-R

09:55:04 Vice Chair Mark Noland

09:56:16 Becky Schlauch, DOR

09:56:47 Vice Chair Mark Noland

09:57:20 Vice Chair Willis Curdy

09:57:40 Becky Schlauch, DOR

**Closing Statement:**

09:57:57 Rep. Edward Buttrey (R), HD 21, closed the hearing on HB 771.

**HEARING ON HB 783 - Generally revise laws related to alcohol**

**Opening Statement:**

10:00:32 Rep. Fiona Nave (R), HD 57, opened the hearing on HB 783, Generally revise laws related to alcohol.

**Proponent Testimony:**

None

**Opponent Testimony:**

10:05:25 Larry Robertson, Montana Winery Association (MWA)

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

10:07:36 Becky Schlauch, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

10:08:04 Vice Chair Willis Curdy

10:08:32 Becky Schlauch, DOR

10:08:57 Vice Chair Willis Curdy

10:09:17 Sen. Walt Sales

10:09:57 Rep. Fiona Nave-R

10:11:15 Chair Jason Small

10:11:42 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

10:12:22 Larry Robertson, MWA

**Closing Statement:**

10:13:28 Rep. Fiona Nave (R), HD 57, closed the hearing on HB 783.

10:14:25 Sen. Fox has left

**HEARING ON HB 579 - Revise distillery laws relating to manufacturing premises and buildings**

**Opening Statement:**

10:15:56 Rep. Katie Sullivan (D), HD 89, opened the hearing on HB 579, Revise distillery laws relating to manufacturing premises and buildings.

**Proponent Testimony:**

10:16:56 Jennifer Hensley, Montana Distillers Guild (MDG)

10:20:15 Courtney McKee, self

10:24:24 Michael Lawlor, self

10:25:54 Tyrrell Hibbard, self

**Opponent Testimony:**

None

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

10:27:52 Steve Swanson, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

10:28:18 Sen. Walt Sales

10:28:53 Jennifer Hensley, MDG

10:29:36 Sen. Walt Sales

10:29:53 Jennifer Hensley, MDG

10:30:19 Chair Jason Small

10:30:26 Jennifer Hensley, MDG

10:30:59 Vice Chair Mark Noland

10:31:55 Steve Swanson, DOR

10:32:15 Sen. Christopher Pope

10:34:59 Jennifer Hensley, MDG

**Closing Statement:**

10:35:33 Rep. Katie Sullivan (D), HD 89, closed the hearing on HB 579.

**HEARING ON HB 539 - Generally revise alcohol laws**

**Opening Statement:**

10:36:49 Rep. Katie Zolnikov (R), HD 45, opened the hearing on HB 539, Generally revise alcohol laws.

**Proponent Testimony:**

10:42:19 Michael Lawlor, self

10:47:36 Michael Jacquard, self

10:48:33 Jessie Luther, Hospitality and Development Association (HDA)

10:50:52 Ryan Kunz, self

**Opponent Testimony:**

10:52:17 Becky Schlauch, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

None

**Questions from Committee:**

10:59:12 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

11:01:31 Jessie Luther, HDA

11:01:59 Vice Chair Willis Curdy

11:02:40 Becky Schlauch, DOR

11:03:36 Sen. Walt Sales

11:08:45 Jessie Luther, HDA

11:09:23 Chair Jason Small

11:15:43 Sen. Christopher Pope

11:20:45 Michel Lawlor, self  
11:21:15 Sen. Christopher Pope  
11:21:24 Rep. Katie Zolnikov-R  
11:22:18 Sen. Christopher Pope  
11:26:54 Becky Schlauch, DOR  
11:28:00 Vice Chair Mark Noland  
11:28:36 Becky Schlauch, DOR  
11:28:54 Sen. Bruce Gillespie  
11:29:28 Jessie Luther, HDA

**Closing Statement:**

11:31:01 Rep. Katie Zolnikov (R), HD 45, closed the hearing on HB 539.

**HEARING ON HB 611 - Revise marijuana labeling requirements**

**Opening Statement:**

11:42:49 Rep. Jane Gillette (R), HD 64, opened the hearing on HB 611, Revise marijuana labeling requirements.

**Discussion:**

[EXHIBIT\(230320BUSa7\)](#)

**Proponent Testimony:**

11:45:31 Colleen Smith, Youth Connections

**Opponent Testimony:**

11:47:53 Pepper Petersen, Montana Cannabis Guild (MCG)  
11:50:14 Cate Cholewa, Montana Cannabis Industry Association (MCIA)  
11:53:17 Antonette Lininger, self  
11:54:42 Joanna Barney, self

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

11:56:11 Kristen Barbour, Department of Revenue (DOR)

**Questions from Committee:**

11:56:46 Chair Jason Small

11:57:50 Amanda Dunn, DOR

11:58:25 Vice Chair Mark Noland

11:59:34 Sen. Christopher Pope

11:59:55 Kristen Barbour, DOR

12:00:57 Sen. Walt Sales

12:01:26 Rep. Jane Gillette-R

**Closing Statement:**

12:02:26 Rep. Jane Gillette (R), HD 64, closed the hearing on HB 611.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 12:05:03

---

Lorna Mason, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230320BUSaad\)](#)