

MINUTES
MONTANA SENATE
68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION
COMMITTEE ON (S) NATURAL RESOURCES

Call to Order: Chair Walt Sales-R, on March 29, 2023 at 3:05 PM, in 303

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Sen. Jeffrey Welborn, Chair (R)
Sen. Shane Morigeau, Vice Chair (D)
Sen. Walt Sales, Vice Chair (R)
Sen. Bob Brown (R)
Sen. Willis Curdy (D)
Sen. Pat Flowers (D)
Sen. Bruce Gillespie (R)
Sen. Mike Lang (R)
Sen. Jason Small (R)
Sen. Barry Usher (R)

Members Excused: Sen. Ryan Lynch (D)

Staff Present: Jason Mohr, Research Analyst
Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

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 520 03/22/2023

HB 576 03/22/2023

HB 656 03/22/2023

Executive Action:

HB 289

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 289 - Revise notification of owner's costs for oil/gas well

15:06:51 **Motion:** Sen. Walt Sales moved that **HB 289 BE CONCURRED IN.**

15:07:04 **Motion:** Sen. Walt Sales moved that **HB 289 BE AMENDED.**

Discussion:

15:07:24 Jason Mohr

15:08:09 Sen. Mike Lang

15:08:21 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

15:08:56 Jason Mohr

15:09:35 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

15:07:04 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

15:10:11 **Motion:** Sen. Walt Sales moved that **HB 289 BE CONCURRED IN AS AMENDED.**

Discussion:

15:10:30 Sen. Barry Usher

15:10:46 Jason Mohr

15:10:11 **Vote:** Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

15:10:11 **Carrier Assigned:** Sen. Barry Usher

15:13:00 **Recessed**

15:34:15 **Reconvened**

HEARING ON HB 520 - Interim study of private ponds

Opening Statement:

15:34:33 Rep. Denley Loge (R), HD 14, opened the hearing on HB 520, Interim study of private ponds.

Proponent Testimony:

15:36:54 Eileen Ryce, Fishery Department, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

15:40:40 Colin Cooney, Montana Trout Unlimited
15:41:23 Mike Bias, Executive Director, Fishing Outfitters of Montana
15:43:01 Pat Clancey, Montana Chapter for Fishery
15:44:10 Holly Franz, Senior Water Rights Coalition

Opponent Testimony:

None

Informational Witness Testimony:

None

Questions from Committee:

15:45:27 Sen. Bruce Gillespie
15:46:30 Rep. Denley Loge-R
15:47:16 Sen. Mike Lang
15:48:09 Eileen Ryce, FWP
15:50:40 Sen. Barry Usher
15:51:37 Eileen Ryce, FWP
15:53:17 Vice Chair Walt Sales
15:56:00 Rep. Denley Loge-R
15:57:00 Sen. Pat Flowers
16:00:27 Rep. Denley Loge-R
16:01:53 Chair Jeffrey Welborn
16:02:52 Rep. Denley Loge-R

Closing Statement:

16:03:08 Rep. Denley Loge (R), HD 14, closed the hearing on HB 520.

HEARING ON HB 576 - Revise laws related to water and coal mining

Opening Statement:

16:06:16 Rep. Rhonda Knudsen (R), HD 34, opened the hearing on HB 576, Revise laws related to water and coal mining.

Discussion:

[EXHIBIT\(230329NASa1\)](#)

Proponent Testimony:

16:15:56 Darryl James, West Morland Mining

16:19:25 Peggy Trenk, Treasure State Resources Association, on behalf of NorthWestern Energy

16:20:44 Shelby DeMars, Montana Association of Oil and Gas Counties

16:21:15 George Harris, Executive Director, Montana Coal Council

Opponent Testimony:

16:25:30 Art Hayes, Tongue River Water Users Association

16:28:57 Steve Charter, self

16:33:07 Cilnt McRae, self

[EXHIBIT\(230329NASa2\)](#)

16:37:47 Pat Thiele, Bull Mountain Land Alliance

[EXHIBIT\(230329NASa3\)](#)

16:41:29 Tom Bratta, self

16:44:42 Derf Johnson, Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC)

16:46:27 Jasmine Krotkov, Montana Farmers Union

16:47:54 Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon

16:49:07 Charles Denowh, Signal Peak Mine

Informational Witness Testimony:

16:51:19 Sonja Nowakowski, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Questions from Committee:

16:52:01 Sen. Bruce Gillespie
16:56:54 Derryl James, West Morland Mining
16:59:13 Sen. Bruce Gillespie
16:59:56 Derf Johnson, MEIC
17:01:09 Sen. Willis Curdy
17:01:54 Sen. Pat Flowers
17:05:20 Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ
17:06:04 Sen. Pat Flowers
17:07:01 Clint McRae, self
17:09:45 Sen. Willis Curdy
17:10:49 Vice Chair Walt Sales
17:15:58 Darryl James, West Morland Mining
17:16:24 Sen. Mike Lang
17:16:46 Pat Thiele, self

Closing Statement:

17:17:40 Rep. Rhonda Knudsen (R), HD 34, closed the hearing on HB 576.
17:19:38 **Recessed**
17:34:25 **Reconvened**

HEARING ON HB 656 - Revise changes to coal mining operations

Opening Statement:

17:34:48 Rep. Gary Parry (R), HD 39, opened the hearing on HB 656, Revise changes to coal mining operations.

Proponent Testimony:

17:43:43 Darryl James, West Morland Mining

17:45:54 Shelby DeMars, Montana Association of Oil and Gas Counties

17:47:34 Peggy Trenk, Treasure State Resources Association

17:48:16 George Harris, Executive Director, Montana Coal Council

Opponent Testimony:

17:49:13 Tom Baratta, self

17:52:46 Derf Johnson, Montana Environmental Information Center

17:54:50 Clint McGrae, self

[EXHIBIT\(230329NASa4\)](#)

17:57:20 Pat Tellie, Bull Mountain Landowners Alliance

[EXHIBIT\(230329NASa5\)](#)

Informational Witness Testimony:

18:01:46 Sonja Nowakowski, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Questions from Committee:

18:02:15 Sen. Bruce Gillespie

18:02:54 Steve Charter, self

18:03:49 Sen. Pat Flowers

18:04:45 Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ

18:05:05 Sen. Pat Flowers

18:05:16 Darryl James, West Morland Mining

18:06:05 Vice Chair Walt Sales

18:06:36 Rep. Gary Parry-R

18:07:42 Vice Chair Walt Sales

18:08:36 Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ

18:08:55 Sen. Mike Lang

18:09:51 Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ

Closing Statement:

18:10:37 Rep. Gary Parry (R), HD 39, closed the hearing on HB 656.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 18:13:31

Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230329NASaad\)](#)