

## **STANDING COMMITTEE STATUS**

Prepared for the Legislative Council  
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Attached are two charts that have the Bill Count for each Senate and House Standing Committee for the last three sessions.

### Senate Standing Committees

By Senate Rule 30-20, the Legislative Council shall review the workload of the standing committees to determine if any change is indicated in the class of a standing committee for the next legislative session. The Legislative Council's recommendations must be submitted to the leadership nominated or elected at the pre-session caucuses. Any proposed change to the name or class of a committee will necessitate a change in the proposed rules (Joint Rule 30-70, Senate Rule 30-20).

The proposed changes for your consideration that have been raised throughout the interim are:

1. Should Senate Natural Resources and Energy be split back into two standing committees? For example, in 2005 Senate Natural Resources was a Class 2 Committee (MWF) and Senate Energy was a Class 3 Committee (TTh).
2. Should Senate Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation (Class 2) and Senate Local Government (Class 3) be switched so Senate Ag would be Class 3 and Senate Local Government be Class 2?

Legislator and Staff Comments: Some of the change may be a factor of who controls the majority and where bills are sent.

"As Chair of the Senate Local Government Committee, I endorse the change in the classification of the Local Government Committee. On 5 separate occasions, the Committee worked until 10 pm to handle all of our bills. Many of the bills were complex and required detailed examination to ensure that our actions could be successfully implemented at the local level. Furthermore, we had several hearings that lasted two or more hours, and witnesses were turned away.

We tackled two very complex initiatives dealing with subdivision regulatory changes. One of these was handled during the prior interim and still required considerable review and amendments.

As Montana communities continue to experience rapid growth, I have no doubt that next session, additional local government legislative initiatives will be brought forth.

I will be happy to answer any questions. The Senate Local Government committee, in my opinion, did an outstanding job of expending hours working in full and subcommittees to handle these bills. It was truly a bipartisan effort and the new members of the committee benefitted from

the experience and leadership of Senator Liable, Gephardt, Moss and others."

3. In reviewing the numbers Senate State Administration has a bill count that is higher than some Class 1 Committees. Does that warrant a change?

Legislator and Staff Comments: Senate State Ad has been able to handle the job as a Class 2 committee, but there has been interest in a Class 1 designation.

### House Standing Committees

House Rule 30-10 grants the Speaker full authority to determine the total number of members and the party division and lists the names of the standing committees. If there were any proposed changes to the committees, the names of the committees would need to be changed in the proposed rules.

The Legislative Council does not have explicit review authority over the House committees in rule as it does over the Senate Committees. I have provided the information for you and believe that because proposed changes to the rules will be forwarded to the newly nominated or elected leadership, the Legislative Council is an appropriate body to make recommendations and could forward any proposed changes regarding House Standing Committees or Legislative Council authority.

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