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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE
69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS	HOUSE MEMBERS	COMMITTEE STAFF
Kenneth Bogner	Ed Buttrey	Maddelyn Pennington - Secretary
Ellie Boldman	Brian Close	Jameson Walker – Legal Staff
Josh Kassmier	Jamie Isaly	Matthew Weaver – Lead Staff
Mark Noland	Brandon Ler	
	Nelly Nicol	
	Peter Strand	
	Morgan Thiel	

MINUTES LOG

January 20, 2026
Room 137
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

Access to an electronic copy of these minutes and the audio or video recording is provided from the Legislative Branch home page at https://leg.mt.gov. From the home page, select the "Committees" drop down menu at the top, then select Administrative or Interim, and the appropriate committee. The written minutes log can be located by expanding the accordion menu for the date of the meeting. Links to the audio/video files can be located by selecting the Video/Audio button on the same page, then the "past/current recordings" button. From there, use the calendar to select the date of the meeting you wish to view/listen to. The written Minutes Log, along with links to the audio and video recordings, is listed by meeting date on the interim committee's web page. Each of the Exhibits is linked and can be viewed by clicking on the Exhibit of interest. All Exhibits are public information and may be printed.
Please contact the Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for more information.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Rep. Brandon Ler, Presiding Officer (R)
Sen. Ellie Boldman, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R)
Rep. Ed Buttrey (R)
Rep. Brian Close (D)
Rep. Jamie Isaly (D)
Sen. Josh Kassmier (R)
Rep. Nelly Nicol (R)
Sen. Mark Noland (R)
Rep. Peter Strand (D)
Rep. Morgan Thiel (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:
Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary
Jameson Walker, Attorney

Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff

AGENDA (Attachment 1)

VISITORS' LIST (Attachment 2)

TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

09:04:12 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

09:05:29 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

Public Comment

09:06:41 Quinlan O'Connor, Chief Legal, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)

09:08:20 **Recessed**

09:15:40 **Reconvened**

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (MDA)

09:15:51 Jillien Streit, Director, MDA

Public Comment

09:31:24 Tami Williams

09:31:40 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:32:13 Sen. Mark Noland

09:33:02 Dir. Jillien Streit, MDA

09:36:21 Sen. Kenneth Bogner

09:36:35 Dir. Jillien Streit, MDA

09:38:13 Rep. Jamie Isaly

09:38:35 Dir. Jillien Streit, MDA

09:38:41 Sen. Kenneth Bogner left the meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW – Continued

Public Comment

09:42:31 Tami Williams

09:44:27 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

09:47:00 Rep. Ed Buttrey

09:47:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (MDA)– Continued

Public Comment

09:47:51 Jodi Majerus Delaney

09:52:07 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

09:54:04 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

09:55:33 Jodi Majerus Delaney

09:56:09 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

09:56:17 Rep. Ed Buttrey

09:57:09 **Recessed**

10:13:19 **Reconvened**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 61 – PROPERTY INSURANCE IN MONTANA

10:13:40 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

10:14:45 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

10:15:27 Lyn Elliot, Vice President of State Government Relations, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)

EXHIBIT 1

10:25:04 Brandon Vick, Regional Vice President for the Northwest Region, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)

EXHIBIT 2

10:33:40 Michael DeLong, Research and Advocacy Associate, Consumer Federation of America (CFA)

EXHIBIT 3

10:49:58 Kristin Page-Nei, Government Relations Director, AARP Montana

EXHIBIT 4

EXHIBIT 5

10:58:13 Kimiko Barrett, Wildfire Researcher & Policy Analyst, Headwaters Economics

EXHIBIT 6

Public Comment

11:07:18 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, Commissioner of Securities & Insurance (CSI), State Auditor's Office

11:07:29 Rep. Ed Buttrey & Sen. Josh Kassmier left the meeting.

11:11:25 Scott Countryman, Insurance Broker, Kalispell

11:14:32 Joe Kolman, Montana Electric Cooperative Association

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:15:56 Rep. Jamie Isaly

11:16:35 Brandon Vick, NAMIC

11:17:16 Kimiko Barrett, Headwaters Economics

11:18:51 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

11:20:49 Sen. Mark Noland

11:21:54 Lyn Elliott, APCIA

11:23:06 Sen. Josh Kassmier joined the meeting.

11:23:36 Brandon Vick, NAMIC
11:25:43 Rep. Ed Buttrey joined the meeting.
11:25:52 Kimiko Barrett, Headwaters Economics
11:27:05 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:27:49 Michael Delong, CFA
11:28:41 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:29:00 Sen. Mark Noland
11:31:15 Brandon Vick, NAMIC
11:32:02 Kristin Page-Nei, AARP Montana
11:32:30 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Public Comment - Continued
11:33:47 Ethan Aumann, Senior Director of Environmental Issues and Resiliency, APCIA

Committee Questions / Discussion - Continued
11:35:38 Rep. Brian Close
11:35:51 Kimiko Barrett, Headwaters Economics
11:39:17 Rep. Nelly Nicol
11:40:29 Brandon Vick, NAMIC
11:42:58 Trevor Graff, CSI
11:43:51 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
11:45:49 Kimiko Barrett, Headwaters Economics
11:47:59 Michael DeLong, CFA
11:51:13 Rep. Ed Buttrey
11:51:43 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:55:21 Rep. Ed Buttrey
11:56:14 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

12:57:12 **Recessed**
13:07:00 **Reconvened**

EMERGING ISSUES: AUTO-INSURANCE RIGHT TO APPRAISAL PROGRESS REPORT
13:07:52 Melissa Lewis, Montana Collision Repair Association (MCRA)
EXHIBIT 7

Public Comment
13:11:07 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, Commissioner of Securities & Insurance (CSI), State Auditor's Office

Committee Questions / Discussion
13:12:05 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
13:12:17 Melissa Lewis, MCRA

13:13:14 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

13:13:21 Rep. Ed Buttrey

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 27 – MORTICIANS AND FUNERAL SERVICES

13:15:25 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler left the meeting and Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman assumed the position of Presiding Officer.

13:15:32 Acting Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

13:15:56 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 8

13:17:15 Rep. Ed Buttrey

13:18:17 Terri James, Executive Director, Montana Funeral Directors Association (MFDA)

EXHIBIT 9

EXHIBIT 10

13:24:55 Brad Longcake, Montana Funeral Directors Association

13:27:39 Rick Walter, Mortician, Board of Funeral Service

13:34:09 Erin Sullivan, Policy Analyst, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)

Public Comment

13:36:49 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:37:00 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler rejoined the meeting and resumed the position of Presiding Officer.

13:37:10 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

13:38:07 Erin Sullivan, DLI

13:41:47 Rick Walter, Board of Funeral Service

13:43:48 Rep. Jamie Isaly

13:44:09 Erin Sullivan, DLI

13:44:38 Rick Walter, Board of Funeral Service

13:47:03 Rep. Brian Close

13:47:20 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

13:48:24 Erin Sullivan, DLI

13:49:03 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

13:49:39 **Recessed**

14:05:20 **Reconvened**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 11 – FARMERS MARKETS: DEFINITION CHANGE, 50-50-102(8) MCA

14:05:22 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:05:59 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 11

14:06:29 Maura Henn, Coordinator, Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition

14:09:26 Sadie Overlie, Lead Sanitarian, Environmental Health and Food Safety Section, Department of Public Health and Humans Services (DPHHS)

Public Comment

14:09:56 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:10:16 Rep. Brian Close

14:10:31 Sadie Overlie, DPHHS

14:10:41 Rep. Ed Buttrey

14:11:03 Sadie Overlie, DPHHS

14:11:55 Maura Henn, Grow Montana Food Policy Coalition

14:13:00 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:13:28 Rep. Jamie Isaly

14:13:44 Matthew Weaver, LSD

14:15:53 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Motion

14:16:00 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman moved to allow committee staff to draft legislation to update the definition of farmers markets on behalf of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

14:16:54 Matthew Weaver, LSD

14:17:02 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:18:08 Rep. Peter Strand

Vote

14:18:41 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Sen. Mark Noland was unavailable for the vote due to technical issues.

14:19:52 **Recessed**

14:37:51 **Reconvened**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 33 - RX DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN STUDY: EXAMPLE LEGISLATION

14:38:13 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 12

EXHIBIT 13

14:39:22 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler left the meeting and Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman assumed the position of Presiding Officer.

14:39:57 Acting Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

14:40:38 Rep. Ed Buttrey

Public Comment

14:40:54 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA)

14:41:24 Marcus Caruso, Prime Therapeutics

14:41:52 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler rejoined the meeting and resumed the position of Presiding Officer.

14:42:00 EJ Redding, Montana Family Pharmacies

EXHIBIT 14

14:43:48 Tony King, Montana Pharmacy Association

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:44:47 Rep. Ed Buttrey

14:47:07 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

14:47:52 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:48:28 Rep. Peter Strand

Public Comment - Continued

14:49:58 Trevor Graff, CSI

14:50:37 EJ Redding, Montana Family Pharmacies

14:51:39 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, PCMA

Committee Questions / Discussion - Continued

14:52:19 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, LSD

14:53:11 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:54:22 Rep. Ed Buttrey

14:55:40 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:56:14 Rep. Ed Buttrey

14:57:08 Rep. Peter Strand

14:57:36 Rep. Ed Buttrey

14:58:22 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:59:55 Rep. Jamie Isaly

15:00:10 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:00:58 Sen. Josh Kassmier

15:01:21 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:02:17 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:02:32 Matthew Weaver, LSD

EXHIBIT 15

15:03:43 Jameson Walker, LSD

15:04:33 Rep. Ed Buttrey

15:04:54 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:05:14 Rep. Brian Close

15:05:37 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:07:44 **Recessed**

15:34:13 **Reconvened**

MEMBER TOPIC - INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES: KRATOM, HEMP, ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES
Revisions to Federal Definition of Hemp and Impact on Montana Code Annotated

15:34:41 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

EXHIBIT 16

15:35:15 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler left the meeting and Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman assumed the position of Presiding Officer.

15:35:57 Acting Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:36:18 Kristan Barbour, Administrator, Cannabis and Alcohol Regulation Division (CARD)

EXHIBIT 17

15:40:50 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler rejoined the meeting and resumed the position of Presiding Officer.

15:40:53 Ian Foley, Agricultural Sciences Division Administrator, Department of Agriculture

Public Comment

15:46:55 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:47:12 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:48:00 Ian Foley, Department of Agriculture

15:50:43 Sen. Mark Noland

15:50:54 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:51:10 Rep. Ed Buttrey

15:51:41 Ian Foley, Department of Agriculture

15:52:56 Kristan Barbour, CARD

MEMBER TOPIC - INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES: KRATOM, HEMP, ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES – Continued
Kratom Legislation Discussion - House Bill 407

15:53:48 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:54:39 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman left the meeting.

15:54:31 Kristan Barbour, CARD

15:56:02 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:57:17 Ian Foley, Department of Agriculture

Public Comment

15:57:46 Jean Branscum, CEO, Montana Medical Association (MMA)

EXHIBIT 18

15:59:39 Scott Boulanger, American Kratom Association

16:00:48 Mac Haddow, American Kratom Association

16:04:26 Walker Gallman, Legislative Director, Global Kratom Association

Committee Questions / Discussion

16:08:47 Sen. Mark Noland

16:10:12 Rep. Ed Buttrey

16:12:49 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

16:13:59 Rep. Nelly Nicol

16:17:12 Rep. Peter Strand

16:18:05 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

16:18:47 Rep. Jamie Isaly

16:19:45 Rep. Brian Close

Public Comment - Continued

16:20:24 Stefan Flores, Billings

16:25:28 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Committee Questions / Discussion - Continued

16:26:18 Rep. Nelly Nicol

16:29:42 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

EMERGING ISSUES: AUTO-INSURANCE RIGHT TO APPRAISAL PROGRESS REPORT - Continued

16:30:40 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Public Comment

16:31:13 Aimee Grmoljez, Attorney, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)

16:33:27 Bruce Spencer, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)

16:37:07 Greg Van Horssen, State Farm Insurance Company

16:40:17 Melissa Lewis, Montana Collision Repair Association

EXHIBIT 19

EXHIBIT 20

EXHIBIT 21

16:46:05 Frank Cote, Insurance Consumer

16:48:04 Anthony Drahos, Teak Claim Consultants

Committee Questions / Discussion

16:51:52 Rep. Ed Buttrey

16:52:37 Bruce Spencer, NAMIC

16:54:53 Rep. Jamie Isaly

16:55:38 Anthony Drahos, Teak Claim Consultants

16:57:16 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

16:58:32 Rep. Brian Close

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY TOPIC UNDER THE COMMITTEE'S JURISDICTION BUT NOT ON THIS AGENDA

16:59:15 None

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP

16:59:38 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

17:00:00 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

17:00:19 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, LSD

EXHIBIT 22

Committee Questions / Discussion

17:03:54 Rep. Ed Buttrey

Motion

17:04:54 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman moved for committee staff to draft legislation that would assign all gambling issues to the Economic Affairs Interim Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

17:05:28 None

Public Comment

17:05:45 None

Vote

17:05:58 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Sen. Mark Noland voting 'yes' by proxy.

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued

17:06:36 Matthew Weaver, LSD

(See Exhibit 15)

17:09:14 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

17:12:11 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

17:12:47 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

17:13:20 Rep. Ed Buttrey

17:16:19 Matthew Weaver, LSD

17:17:14 Rep. Ed Buttrey

17:17:18 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 17:18:09