



2025-2026 **DRAFT** WORK PLAN

Economic Affairs Interim
Committee

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2025-2026 WORK PLAN

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ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS

SENATORS	REPRESENTATIVES
Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R - Miles City)	Rep. Ed Buttrey (R - Great Falls)
Sen. Ellie Boldman (D - Missoula)	Rep. Brian Close (D - Bozeman)
Sen. Joshua Kassmier (R - Fort Benton)	Rep. Jamie Islay (D - Bozeman)
Sen. Mark Noland (R - Big Fork)	Rep. Brandon Ler (R - Savage)
	Rep. Nelly Nicol (R - Billings)
	Rep. Peter Strand (D - Bozeman)
	Rep. Morgan Thiel (R - Sidney)

STAFF MEMBERS

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COMMITTEE WEBSITE:

<https://committees.legmt.gov/#/nonStandingCommittees/9>

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF DRAFT WORK PLAN

This draft work plan details the Economic Affairs Interim Committee's (EAIC or Committee) study and agency oversight duties for the interim, which runs from July 2025 through September 15, 2026. It also discusses other activities the Committee may undertake. The work plan includes tools to help the Committee determine its level of involvement in its interim study assignments and its agency and other monitoring duties.

Once adopted, the Committee's work plan serves as a blueprint for the Committee's activities over the interim. The final work plan reflects the Committee's priorities, as indicated by the amount of time the Committee decides to spend on each of its tasks. Staff uses the work plan to undertake research and arrange presentations related to the Committee's studies and other duties. Stakeholders and other members of the public use the plan to track various topics and other items of interest.

Based on decisions made at the Committee's organizational meeting, the final work plan will include a schedule of activities for each Committee meeting.

COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The EAIC is one of several interim committees established in section [5-5-202](#), MCA, and required to meet between legislative sessions. Interim committees are tasked with:

1. Reviewing administrative rules within its jurisdiction;
2. Conducting interim studies as assigned;
3. Monitoring the operation of assigned executive branch agencies;
4. Reviewing advisory councils and required reports;
5. Reviewing proposed legislation of assigned agencies;
6. Reviewing proposed ballot initiatives; and
7. Preparing bills and resolutions that committee members believe should be presented to the next Legislature.

EAIC is assigned to monitor the following executive branch agencies:

1. Division of Banking & Financial Institutions - Department of Administration
2. Department of Agriculture
3. Department of Commerce
4. Department of Labor & Industry
5. Department of Livestock
6. Alcoholic Beverage Control Division - Department of Revenue
7. Cannabis Control Division - Department of Revenue
8. Governor's Office of Economic Development
9. Montana State Fund
10. State Auditor and Insurance Commissioner

WHAT DOES EAIC DO?

Conducts interim studies

Monitors agencies

Reviews administrative rules

Reviews advisory councils and reports

Determines member issues to examine

Reviews ballot initiatives

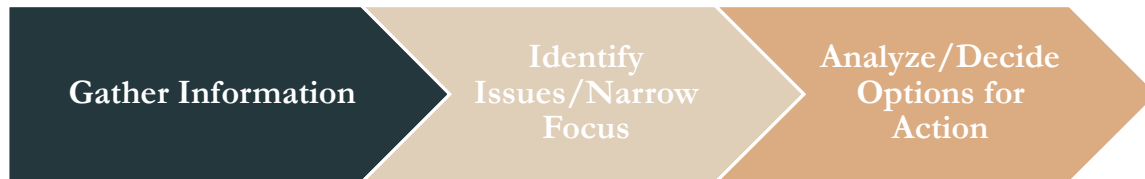
Proposes and reviews legislation

INTERIM STUDIES

The 2025 Legislature approved 36 interim study resolutions. The Legislative Council assigned the study resolutions to the various interim committees on June 10, 2025. The EAIC was assigned six interim studies: HJ's 27, 52, 55, and 61; and SJ's 11 and 33.

BASIC STUDY PROCESS

An interim study typically involves information gathering, issue identification, and recommendations.



The first phase of the study is carried out over the first few meetings of the interim, when the Committee:

- Reviews staff research papers and other information materials on study topics;
- Hears presentations by people with experience and expertise on various aspects of the study topics; and
- Takes public comment from interested parties, who may offer specific study-related suggestions.

In the second phase, the Committee spends a meeting or two narrowing the focus of the study. Members identify topics or questions they'd like to analyze further. This phase helps members concentrate on the issues they consider to be of the greatest importance and obtain any additional information needed to make final recommendations.

During the final stage, members review and decide on options for action. Potential solutions, including legislation, are usually reviewed, and refined at multiple meetings before the Committee takes final action.

HJ 61: STUDY ON THE PROPERTY INSURANCE MARKET IN MONTANA

Sponsor: Rep. Seckinger

Poll Rank: 1

STUDY TASKS

- Evaluate the causes and impacts of increasing property insurance rates in Montana.
- Recommend strategies that could stabilize the property insurance market and contribute to more accessible/affordable property insurance.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D
FTE Allocation			
0.50 FTE	0.25 FTE	.05 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Additional panel(s) / presentation(s) on request• Stakeholder panel to discuss proposed legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option C• Additional staff research	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel discussion involving State Auditor's Office, representatives of property insurance industry, and Board of Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional staff presentation and research based on topics generated during committee review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff research paper and presentation summarizing panel discussion, providing in-depth review of property insurance issues affecting Montana, examples of legislation from other states, and legislative recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background paper on property insurance and recent trends in insurance costs in MT• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

SJ 33: STUDY ON THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN

Sponsor: Sen. Vinton

Poll Rank: 16

STUDY TASKS

- Map the supply chain of prescription drugs in the state; examine access to and cost of prescription medication.
- Analyze the impact of cost and access on patients and independent pharmacies, particularly rural ones.
- Examine how other states' state-administered health plans have addressed prescription drug affordability and access.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C
FTE Allocation		
.25 FTE	.15 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Analysis of other states' state-administered health plans• Analysis of rural community drug affordability and access• Review of the current statutory framework the prescription drug supply chain operates within• Report/presentation from national organization addressing prescription drug affordability and access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel with representatives from drug producers and wholesalers, and representatives from the health insurance industry• Panel with representatives from pharmacies and pharmacy benefit managers• Panel with doctors and patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of findings from panel discussion(s) and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background report/presentation on the supply chain in Montana• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

SJ 11: STUDY ON FARMER'S MARKETS AND FOOD SYSTEMS

Sponsor: Sen. Gillespie

Poll Rank: 21

STUDY TASKS

- Examination of farmer's markets and food systems in Montana to promote regional food system infrastructure and coordination

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C
FTE Allocation		
.30 FTE	.10 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Analysis of additional barriers to farmer's market growth, including infrastructure, market access, and regulations• Analysis of farmer's markets role in food security, nutrition, regional food system resilience, consumer protection, producer liability• Analysis of government, nonprofit, private collaboration to support farmer's markets• Analysis of strategies to integrate markets into rural/community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel discussion w/stakeholders, including representatives of small agriculture, farmer's markets, public health, economic development, food systems, tribal government, food security, national security, DPHHS, Department of Agriculture, extension service.• Review of relevant laws, policies, legal decisions, including Montana Local Food Choice Act, cottage food laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary report of findings from panel discussion(s) and analysis with recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background report/presentation of related information from other states• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

HJ 52: STUDY ON THE MONTANA CATTLE INDUSTRY

Sponsor: Rep. Tilleman

Poll Rank: 30

STUDY TASKS

- Examine the profitability and marketability of the state's cattle industry
- Propose legislation to improve management, research, education, and promotion of state beef and beef products
- Support the expansion of domestic and international markets for Montana cattle.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C
FTE Allocation		
.25 FTE	.10 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Analysis of similar state-level cattle assessments in North Dakota, Idaho, Washington, Utah, California, and Texas• Analysis of strengths and challenges of a state assessment based on stakeholder feedback and recommendations• Dept. of Livestock/stakeholder roundtable discussion of a quasi-state agency commodity board to administer and manage a state cattle assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dept. of Ag presentation on assessment collection and refund distribution process, similar to wheat, barley, and pulse crops• Montana Beef Council presentation on existing resources that promote the Montana cattle industry• Panel(s) or stakeholder roundtable discussion on the implementation of a state assessment on Montana cattle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary report of findings from panel discussion(s) and analysis with recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background report/presentation• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

Note: The 2023-2024 EAIC studied agriculture production in Montana

HJ 27: STUDY ON LAWS REGARDING MORTICIANS AND FUNERAL SERVICES

Sponsor: Rep. Baum

Poll Rank: 32

STUDY TASKS

- Review legislation and rules related to mortician licensing and funeral services procedures, including currently unregulated practices of final disposition technologies, such as natural organic reduction and alkaline hydrolysis;
- Propose legislation to update terminology and build frameworks for new final disposition methods.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C
FTE Allocation		
.25 FTE	.05 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Field trip to in-state facility to observe practices and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel discussion involving MT morticians, DLI reps, public health experts, and industry reps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff research paper and presentation providing summary of panel discussion, in-depth review of MT statutes and industry procedures, examples of legislation from other states, and legislative recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background report/presentation on current licensing requirements, mortuary practices, and various final disposition methods• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

HJ 55: STUDY ON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LICENSING AND PRACTICE

Sponsor: Rep. Regier

Poll Rank: 34

STUDY TASKS LISTED IN LEGISLATION

- Review current property manager licensing requirements;
- Review professional practice conformance with Montana Residential Landlord and Tenant Act, and commercial rental contract law;
- Review end-user costs associated with unregulated property management services costs;
- Review the impact of unlicensed and unregulated foreign corporation and investment groups on rental quality;
- Identify potential legislation based on best practices from other states.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

Option A	Option B	Option C
FTE Allocation		
.25 FTE	.05 FTE	0.0 FTE
Committee Activities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Additional staff research and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel discussion involving representatives for property managers, tenant unions, and housing policy experts• 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Action
Staff Deliverables		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff research paper and presentation providing summary of panel discussion, in-depth review of MT statutes and industry procedures, examples of legislation from other states, and legislative recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff background paper on current licensing requirements, key aspects of Landlord-Tenant Act, and some examples of other states' laws• Legislation on request	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None

AGENCY OVERSIGHT RESPONSIBILITIES

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

Interim committees are required to review administrative rule proposals of the agencies for which they have oversight responsibility. The committee's legislative attorney reviews rulemaking notices and provides regular updates, noting any rules that may be out of compliance with the Montana Administrative Procedure Act (MAPA). That law allows interim committees to:

- Obtain an agency's rulemaking records to review them for compliance;
- Submit written recommendations on adopting, amending, or rejecting a rule;
- Require that a rulemaking hearing be held;
- Require an economic impact statement relating to a rule adoption; and
- Poll the Legislature by mail to determine if a proposed rule is consistent with legislative intent.

Interim committees may also delay the adoption of proposed rules by objecting to proposals that members believe do not comply with the provisions of MAPA. The Speaker of the House and the Senate President may break a tie vote on any rule objection being considered by an interim committee.

Decision Point: It is up to the Committee to decide whether to ask for a formal presentation on each rule review memorandum, or whether to have a discussion only if committee members have questions or concerns.

PROGRAM MONITORING

EAIC's program monitoring duties require specific attention to:

- Identifying issues likely to require future legislative attention.
- Identifying opportunities to improve existing laws governing the agency's operations.
- Determining whether citizen experience with the agency may be improved on through legislative action.

Decision Point: During the organizational meeting, every agency under the Committee's purview will present an introductory overview. Thereafter, it is up to the Committee to decide what agencies to focus on and how much time to allocate in its work plan for additional program monitoring activities.

LICENSING BOARD ACTIVE SUPERVISION REVIEW

As part of its monitoring duties to the Department of Labor and Industry, the EAIC monitors determinations as to whether any board actions are considered by the Commissioner to be anticompetitive. The Committee may initiate

further hearings, suspend the Commissioner’s determinations, or provide an alternative process for those alleging possible antitrust activities by boards or licensees.

MONTANA STATE FUND LEGISLATIVE LIAISONS

Under 2-15-1019, MCA, the EAIC’s presiding officer is to appoint liaisons to the Montana State Fund:

2-15-1019. Board of directors of state compensation insurance fund – legislative liaisons.

...

(8) There must be two legislative liaisons to the board consisting of members of the economic affairs interim committee provided for in 5-5-223. Subject to 5-5-234, the presiding officer of the economic affairs interim committee shall appoint the liaisons from the majority party and the minority party at the first interim committee meeting.

Liaisons attend approximately four MSF meetings per year during the interim. Quarterly meetings are anticipated in March, June, September, and December. Liaisons are reimbursed for their time through a separate budget, and no committee time is dedicated to this statutory obligation.

REVIEW OF DRAFT LEGISLATION

The interim committee process allows for an early review of agency-requested legislation. Interim committees can begin reviewing proposed legislation as early as June in the year preceding the legislative session. This process frees up time for the Legislative Services Division to concentrate on legislator bill draft requests after the election. Agency bills drafted because of this process must be introduced before the 2027 legislative session begins.

REVIEW OF STATUTORILY ESTABLISHED ADVISORY COUNCILS AND REPORTS

ADVISORY COUNCIL REVIEW

5-5-215, MCA, provides for review of statutorily established advisory councils and associated required reports of assigned agencies if requested by any member of the committee.

Advisory councils subject to EAIC review are:

Agency	Entity	Statutory Authority
Dept. of Agriculture	• Noxious Weed Management Advisory Council	• 80-7-805
	• Organic Commodity Advisory Council	• 80-11-601
Dept. of Commerce	• Tourism Advisory Council	• 2-15-1816
Dept. of Labor & Industry	• Licensing Boards - Monitor for potential sunseting or combining	• 2-8-404

The following boards, committees, or other entities may contain an advisory function, but either are not specifically termed advisory councils or created statutorily:

Agency	Entity	Statutory Authority
Dept. of Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Hail Insurance Agricultural Development Council Alfalfa Seed Committee Potato Advisory Committee Pulse Crop Committee Wheat and Barley Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-15-3003 2-15-3015 2-15-3004 80-11-510 2-15-3007 2-15-3002
Dept. of Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Horseracing Board of Housing Coal Board Hard Rock Mining Impact Board Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities Montana Facility Finance Authority State Tribal Economic Development Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-15-1809 2-15-1814 2-15-1821 2-15-1822 2-15-1869 2-15-1815 90-1-131
Dept. of Labor & Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board of Personnel Appeals Montana State Workforce Innovation Board Unemployment Insurance Appeals Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2-15-1705 53-2-1203 2-15-1704

REPORTS

Unless otherwise directed in statute, reports to the legislature, including reports to specific interim committees, are biennial reports and need to be submitted in written form by September 1 of the year preceding a legislative session.

NEW IN 2025

In addition to the existing statutorily required reports, the following bills were passed in the 2025 session that include reporting to or monitoring by the EAIC:

HB 335: Revise laws related to professional licensing board appointments and reporting requirements

SB 335: Generally revise laws related to dental insurance

Reports that are statutorily required to be submitted to the EAIC are:

Report	Entity	Deadline	Statute
Marijuana licensing report	CCD	Periodic	16-12-110
Marijuana inspection report	CCD	Biennial	16-12-210
Law enforcement agency facial recognition technology use	DOJ	9/1/2025 9/1/2026	44-15-111
3rd-party vendor providing facial recognition to state agency	State agency	9/1/2025 9/1/2026	44-15-111
Weighing device license fees and cost increases	DLI	Biennial	30-12-203
Distressed Wood Products Industry Loan Account	DOC	Annual	90-1-503

MT Heritage Preservation & Development Commission Administrative Rate	DOC	Annual	22-3-1002
Hydrocarbon & Geology Investigation Program investigation(s)	Bureau of Mines and Geology	If initiated	90-2-201
Coal Ash Markets Investigation Program investigation(s)	DOC	If initiated	90-2-202
Montana Prescription Drug Registry	Board of Pharmacy	Annual	37-7-1514
Complaints against physicians certifying medical marijuana use	Board of Medical Examiners	Annual	37-3-203
Status of special revenue account	Board of Funeral Services		37-19-204
Montana State Fund Annual Report	MSF	Annual	5-5-223
Montana Reinsurance Association Annual Report	SAO	6/30/2025	33-22-1308
State Shooting Facilities and Improvements Development Oversight Task Force	Task Force	6/30/2027	HB 899

OTHER INTERIM ACTIVITIES

MEMBER TOPICS & EMERGING ISSUES

Interim committees may take up other matters related to the agencies and topic areas they oversee. Depending on whether members put greater or less emphasis on their statutory duties related to interim studies and agency monitoring, they have more time to focus on EAIC-relevant member issues.

Members may propose investigation of emerging issues at any time during the interim. Agencies may also request that the Committee study an emerging issue that has resulted from court decisions, federal actions, or another cause.

Emerging issues are not necessarily member issues and may be raised by an agency or by staff. However, to be on the agenda, the presiding officer or other EAIC member must request agenda time. Staff resources are limited, so additions to a work plan must be accompanied by deletions to retain scheduling balance.

Decision Point: It is up to the Committee to decide what member topics to focus on and how much time to allocate in its work plan for these topics.

COMMITTEE BILL DRAFTS

Per 5-5-215, MCA (revised in 2025 with HB 142), Interim committees “shall prepare bills and resolutions that, in its opinion, the welfare of the state may require for presentation to the next regular session of the legislature.” 5-5-215 further states:

“(2) . . . An interim committee may by vote request five bill drafts on a partisan basis and an unlimited number of bill drafts on a bipartisan basis.”

...

(4) As used in this section:

(a) “bipartisan basis” means a vote in which members from more than one party vote to request a bill draft; and

(b) “partisan basis” means a vote in which members from only the majority vote to request a bill draft.”

REVIEW OF PROPOSED BALLOT INITIATIVES

The EAIC is required to review proposed statewide initiatives that relate to its subject area. The Legislature enacted Senate Bill 93 (SB 93) in 2023 to clarify and analyze the review process enacted in House Bill 651 (HB 651) in 2021. The revised law provides that a statewide initiative includes a constitutional initiative, a constitutional convention initiative, or a statutory initiative.

Section 13 of SB 93 requires the interim committee to hold a public hearing on a statewide initiative referred to the committee by the executive director of the Legislative Services Division. The committee then votes to either support or not support the placement of the proposed statewide initiative on the ballot. The petition used to gather

signatures to place the statewide initiative on the ballot must include the interim committee vote. SB 93 applies to statewide initiatives submitted to the secretary of state after May 19, 2023.

The statutory requirement for interim committee review of ballot initiatives is currently being litigated at the Montana Supreme Court. Staff will update the committees when litigation is completed and if the committees have any duties in this area while the case is pending. (Case: *Ellingson v. State*, Montana Supreme Court No. DA 25-0142 (Filed Feb. 18, 2025).)

ALLOCATION OF COMMITTEE TIME

The EAIC meets several times during an interim to work on studies, statutory duties, and member topics. At the end of the interim, the committee will have developed findings and recommendations for one or more reports. The Committee may have also drafted legislation.

Committees sometimes travel outside of Helena to carry out activities either related to a specific study or to the committee's general agency oversight duties. Legislative Council rules state that interim committee meetings are held in the Capitol "unless otherwise designated by the presiding officer." Meetings held outside of Helena generally cost more than those held in Helena because the committee budget must also pay for the costs of staff travel. As a result, the committee may need to hold fewer meetings to accommodate the additional costs of travel if it chooses to hold any meetings outside of Helena.

This agenda may change once the Committee identifies specific studies and member topics. The proposed meeting schedule and work plan timeline below includes several proposed two-day meetings in case the Committee elects to conduct field trips for studies or member topics.

PROPOSED MEETING SCHEDULE

The proposed schedule can be revised if the Committee prefers to hold more or fewer two-day meetings, hold a meeting outside of Helena, or schedule one meeting to coordinate with the interim budget committee meetings.

Date of Meeting	
Tuesday	July 22, 2025
Thursday	October 02, 2025
Thursday	November 12-13, 2025
Thursday	January 15, 2026
Tuesday	March 10, 2026
Thursday-Friday	May 14-15, 2026
Thursday-Friday	July 16, 2026
Wednesday	September 10, 2026

PROPOSED TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES

July 22, 2025	October 02, 2025	November 12-13, 2025	January 15, 2026	March 10, 2026	May 14-15, 2026	July 16, 2026	September 10, 2026
Draft work plan	Finalize work plan	Revise work plan, as necessary					→
Begin statutory duties	Continue statutory duties						→
Consider study resolutions	Begin studies	Gather background	Identify options		→	Consider draft findings, recommendations	Finalize findings, recommendations
Prioritize member topics	Explore member topics						→
					Propose draft legislation	Review draft legislation	Approve legislation for pre-introduction
						Approve agency legislation for pre-introduction	Approve agency legislation for pre-introduction
							Receive required reports from agencies