



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Kenneth Bogner
Ellie Boldman
Josh Kassmier
Mark Noland

HOUSE MEMBERS

Ed Buttrey
Brian Close
Jamie Isaly
Brandon Ler
Nelly Nicol
Peter Strand
Morgan Thiel

COMMITTEE STAFF

Maddelyn Pennington - Secretary
Jameson Walker - Legal Staff
Matthew Weaver - Lead Staff

MINUTES LOG

November 12, 2025
Day 1 - 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. Brian Close (D)
Rep. Jamie Isaly (D)
Sen. Josh Kassmier (R)
Rep. Nelly Nicol (R)
Rep. Peter Strand (D)
Rep. Morgan Thiel (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Ed Buttrey (R)
Sen. Mark Noland (R)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary
Jameson Walker, Legal Staff

Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

09:01:36 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler called the meeting to order at 9:02 AM. The committee secretary took roll.
09:02:29 Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 33 - RX DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN PANEL: INSURERS AND PLAN SPONSORS

09:02:53 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
09:04:12 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
09:05:02 Karlee Tebbutt, Regional Director, America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP)
[EXHIBIT 1](#)
09:09:02 Sen. Josh Kassmier left the meeting.

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:13:51 Rep. Brian Close
09:13:59 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
09:14:00 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
09:14:34 Karlee Tebbutt, AHIP

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 33 - RX DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN PANEL: INSURERS AND PLAN SPONSORS - Continued

09:16:01 Nichole Artis, Pharmacy Director, Mountain Health Co-Op
[EXHIBIT 2](#)
09:25:43 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
09:25:56 Matthew Weaver, LSD
09:26:12 David Dross, Pharmacy Consultant, Mercer
[EXHIBIT 3](#)
09:36:14 Sen. Mark Noland joined the meeting.
09:42:30 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Public Comment

09:43:06 Jackie Boyle, Mountain Health Co-Op
09:45:55 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA)
09:47:33 Amy Jenks, Administrator, State of Montana Benefit Plan
09:48:06 Josh Morris, Independent Pharmacies Montana
(See Exhibit 1)
09:49:45 Mike Matovich, Pharmacy Owner
[EXHIBIT 4](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:54:24 Sen. Kenneth Bogner
09:54:49 Karlee Tebbutt, AHIP
09:56:49 Rep. Jamie Isaly
(See Exhibit 1)
09:57:32 Karlee Tebbutt, AHIP
09:58:01 Rep. Jamie Isaly
09:58:08 David Dross, Mercer
10:01:03 Rep. Brian Close
10:01:25 Karlee Tebbutt, AHIP
10:01:59 Nichole Artis, Mountain Health Co-Op
10:02:22 Jackie Boyle, Mountain Health Co-Op
10:03:34 Rep. Brian Close
10:03:43 David Dross, Mercer
10:06:20 Sen. Kenneth Bogner
10:06:40 David Dross, Mercer
10:07:55 Sen. Mark Noland
10:08:18 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, PCMA
10:10:16 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
10:12:45 Jackie Boyle, Mountain Health Co-Op
10:14:51 Sen. Kenneth Bogner left the meeting.
10:16:33 Amy Jenks, State of Montana Benefit Plan
10:19:13 David Dross, Mercer
10:20:59 Karlee Tebbutt, AHIP
10:25:41 Rep. Nelly Nicol
10:26:14 Nichole Artis, Mountain Health Co-Op
10:27:29 David Dross, Mercer
10:36:19 Sen. Mark Noland
10:39:07 Jackie Boyle, Mountain Health Co-Op
(See Exhibit 2)
10:44:12 Rep. Nelly Nicol
10:44:44 David Dross, Mercer
10:46:16 Sen. Mark Noland
10:46:38 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, PCMA
10:49:09 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

10:49:42 **Recessed**
10:55:47 **Reconvened**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 33 - RX DRUG SUPPLY CHAIN PANEL: NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES (NCSL)

10:55:48 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
10:56:24 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
10:57:00 Colleen Becker, Health Program Project Manager, NCSL

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

Public Comment

11:24:35 Tonia Sorrell-Neal, Pharmaceutical Care Management Association (PCMA)
[EXHIBIT 6](#)
11:30:11 Drew Cziok, Government Relations Director, Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS)
11:33:38 Bruce Spencer, Cigna Healthcare

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:37:32 Rep. Brian Close
11:37:50 Colleen Becker, NCSL
11:39:32 Rep. Nelly Nicol
11:40:04 Colleen Becker, NCSL
11:40:57 Sen. Mark Noland

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: CANNABIS AND ALCOHOL REGULATION DIVISION (CARD) / DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE (DOR)

11:41:08 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:43:32 Sen. Josh Kassmier joined the meeting
11:43:39 Kristan Barbour, Administrator, CARD

Public Comment

11:46:55 Jennifer Hensley, Fidelity Diagnostic Laboratory
11:48:35 Alex Sterhan, Administrator, Gambling Control Division

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:49:58 Rep. Jamie Isaly
11:50:22 Kristan Barbour, CARD
11:52:22 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

MEMBER TOPIC: INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES

11:53:16 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:53:50 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:54:36 Stacy Campbell, Administrator, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
11:55:30 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:55:42 Sen. Josh Kassmier left the meeting

11:56:24 Steven Crawford, Bureau Chief, Montana Narcotics Bureau, Department of Justice (DOJ)
11:56:54 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:57:08 Kristan Barbour, Administrator, Cannabis and Alcohol Regulation Division (CARD), Department of Revenue (DOR)

Public Comment

11:58:10 Debra Pitassy, Montana Beer and Wine Distributors Association
11:58:58 John Forte, Yellowstone County Health Officer, Riverstone Health
12:02:14 Kate Cholewa, Montana Cannabis Industry Association
12:03:55 Melissa Lewis, Molson Coors Beverage Company
[EXHIBIT 7](#)
12:04:38 Jennifer Hensley, Montana Academy of Physician Assistants
12:06:04 EJ Redding
12:07:54 Jay Yeager, Billings
12:14:13 Beth Price Morrison, Certified Substance Abuse Specialist, Cascade County
12:16:07 Susan Epper
12:22:50 Wendy Chamberlain, Kratom Danger Awareness Incorporated Nonprofit
12:30:29 Kelli McCann, Fairfield
12:35:48 Susan Cave

Committee Questions / Discussion

12:42:07 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
12:42:27 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
12:42:28 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
12:42:34 Rep. Nelly Nicol
EXHIBIT 8 – Physical Examples of Kratom Products Provided by John Forte, Yellowstone County Health Officer, Riverstone Health
12:43:08 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
12:43:58 Steven Crawford, Montana Narcotics Bureau
12:45:44 Kristan Barbour, CARD
[EXHIBIT 9](#)
12:52:12 Sen. Mark Noland
12:52:27 Kristan Barbour, CARD
12:53:16 Steven Crawford, Montana Narcotics Bureau
12:55:21 Rep. Brian Close
12:55:40 Steven Crawford, Montana Narcotics Bureau
12:56:03 Sen. Kenneth Bogner joined the meeting
12:56:56 John Forte, Yellowstone County Health Officer, Riverstone Health
12:59:30 Rep. Morgan Thiel
13:00:01 John Forte, Yellowstone County Health Officer, Riverstone Health

13:00:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
13:00:47 Steven Crawford, Montana Narcotics Bureau
13:01:22 Sen. Mark Noland
13:03:27 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

13:04:09 **Recessed**

14:14:00 **Reconvened**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 52 - MONTANA CATTLE INDUSTRY

14:14:00 Sen. Josh Kassmier did not return from recess.
14:14:01 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
14:14:12 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 10](#)
14:15:29 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
14:15:50 Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer, Department of Livestock
14:20:19 Sen. Kenneth Bogner joined the meeting.
14:26:03 Rep. Nelly Nicol joined the meeting
14:31:40 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
14:32:24 Chaley Harney, Executive Director, Montana Beef Council
[EXHIBIT 11](#)
14:45:35 Matthew Weaver, LSD
14:45:48 Chaley Harney, Montana Beef Council
(See Exhibit 11)
14:52:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
14:52:42 Liz Edmundson, Montana Pulse Crop Committee
[EXHIBIT 12](#)

Public Comment

15:01:55 John Grande, Grande Ranch Co.
15:05:52 Karli Johnson, Montana Farm Bureau Federation
15:07:04 Rachel Prevost, Montana Farmers Union
15:10:39 Taylor Brown

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:14:04 Sen. Kenneth Bogner
15:14:37 Mike Honeycutt, Department of Livestock
15:17:14 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:17:51 Rep. Peter Strand
15:18:37 Chaley Harney, Montana Beef Council
15:21:52 Sen. Kenneth Bogner left the meeting.
15:23:56 Rep. Jamie Isaly

15:24:33 Chaley Harney, Montana Beef Council
15:26:45 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:27:19 Chaley Harney, Montana Beef Council

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 11 - FARMERS MARKETS

15:27:27 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:28:20 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
[EXHIBIT 13](#)
15:29:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:29:44 Peter Strauss, Helena Farmers' Markets
15:37:46 Rachel Prevost, Grow Montana
15:42:29 Sadie Overlie, Lead Sanitarian, Environmental and Food Safety Section,
Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)

Public Comment

15:42:52 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:43:21 Rep. Brian Close
15:43:41 Sadie Overlie, DPHHS
15:44:18 Peter Strauss, Helena Farmers' Markets

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

15:46:24 Bella Folino, Montana Farmers Union

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP

15:46:43 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:47:02 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
15:47:20 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:47:32 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
15:49:54 Sen. Mark Noland and Sen. Kenneth Bogner joined the meeting.
15:49:49 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:51:46 Sen. Mark Noland

Motion

15:53:00 Sen. Mark Noland moved to reinstate the January 20th, 2026, meeting for the Economic Affairs Interim Committee.

Discussion on the Motion

15:53:09 Rep. Brian Close
15:53:13 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:53:31 Sen. Kenneth Bogner

Vote

15:53:44 Carried unanimously by voice vote.
Rep. Ed Buttrey vote 'yes' by proxy.

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued

15:54:24 Matthew Weaver, LSD
15:54:38 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:55:28 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
15:55:48 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:56:07 Sen. Mark Noland
15:57:30 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
15:58:00 Rep. Brian Close
16:00:09 Rep. Morgan Thiel
16:00:28 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
16:00:52 Rep. Nelly Nicol
16:02:03 Rep. Jamie Isaly
16:14:10 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Motion

16:18:45 Rep. Mark Noland moved to consider studying one agency within the Montana State Fund to see if the state is receiving a fair deal.

Discussion on the Motion

16:19:40 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
16:19:43 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
16:19:45 Rep. Brian Close

Vote

16:19:53 Failed 4 – 6 with Presiding Officer Brandon Ler, Sen. Kenneth Bogner, Rep. Nelly Nicole, and Sen. Mark Noland voting 'yes'.
Rep. Ed Buttrey voting 'no' by proxy

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued

16:20:58 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
16:21:20 Rep. Brian Close
16:22:04 Rep. Jamie Isaly
16:22:09 Rep. Nelly Nicol left the meeting.
16:22:18 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
16:22:28 Matthew Weaver, LSD
16:22:51 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
16:22:58 Sen. Kenneth Bogner

16:23:20 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
16:23:46 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, LSD
16:24:17 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

IN RECESS UNTIL NOVEMBER 13, 2025

Adjournment: 16:24:24