



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL 69th Montana Legislature

### SENATE MEMBERS

Willis Curdy  
John Esp  
Pat Flowers  
Wylie Galt  
Forrest Mandeville  
Tony Tezak

### HOUSE MEMBERS

Paul Fielder  
Tom France  
Steve Gist  
Jedediah Hinkle  
Shannon Maness  
Joshua Seckinger

### PUBLIC MEMBERS

Jim Keane  
Mark Mershon  
Jon Metropoulos  
Brian Yablonski  
**Governors Appointee**  
Christian Bray

### COMMITTEE STAFF

Joseph Carroll – Legal Staff  
Jason Mohr – Legislative  
Environmental Analyst  
Jacelyn Sterling - Secretary

# MINUTES LOG

December 02, 2025

ZOOM ONLY

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. Paul Fielder, Presiding Officer (R)  
Sen. Willis Curdy, Vice Presiding Officer (D)  
Sen. John Esp (R)  
Sen. Pat Flowers (D)  
Rep. Tom France (D)  
Rep. Steve Gist (R)  
Rep. Jedediah Hinkle (R)  
Mike Mershon, Public Member  
Jon Metropoulos, Public Member  
Rep. Joshua Seckinger (D)  
Sen. Tony Tezak (R)  
Christian Bay, Governors Appointee  
Brian Yablonski, Public Member

### MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Wylie Galt (R)  
Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R)  
Rep. Shannon Maness (R)  
Jim Keane, Public Member

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff  
Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst  
Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

**AGENDA** [\(Attachment 1\)](#)

Visitor Log – Zoom only

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

10:03:15 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder called the meeting to order at 10:03 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**LETTER IN SUPPORT OF RARE EARTH AND CRITICAL MINERALS EXTRACTION DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

10:05:30 Jason Mohr, Lead Staff, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 1](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:09:53 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:10:14 Sen. Wylie Galt joined the meeting.

**Public Comment**

10:11:17 Matt Vincent, Executive Director, Montana Mining Association (MMA)  
10:14:20 Julie DaSoglio, Montana Sierra Chapter Club  
10:15:52 Michael Howell, Bitterroot River Protection Association  
10:17:42 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:18:06 Ben Catton, Montana Environmental Information Center

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:20:19 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
10:21:39 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:22:38 Jon Metropoulos  
10:23:04 Sen. Pat Flowers  
10:23:53 Rep. Tom France  
10:24:51 Jon Metropoulos  
10:25:02 Matt Vincent, MMA  
10:28:27 Jon Metropoulos  
10:28:44 Matt Vincent  
10:29:03 Mike Mershon

10:29:44 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
 10:30:03 Matt Vincent, MMA  
 10:30:47 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
 10:32:20 Sen. John Esp  
 10:33:30 Matt Vincent, MMA  
 10:35:20 Sen. John Esp  
 10:35:47 Rep. Steve Gist  
 10:36:29 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
 10:36:52 Sen. John Esp

### **Motion**

10:36:59 Sen. John Esp moved to send the proposed letter with two additional sentences.  
 (see 10:43:50)

### **Discussion on the Motion**

10:37:48 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle  
 10:38:12 Sen. John Esp  
 10:38:28 Jim Keane joined the meeting.  
 10:38:53 Rep. Tom France  
 10:39:44 Sen. John Esp  
 10:39:48 Jason Mohr, LSD  
 10:40:27 Rep. Tom France  
 10:40:53 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
 10:41:19 Jason Mohr, LSD  
 10:42:40 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle  
 10:42:55 Sen. John Esp  
 10:43:30 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
 10:43:50 Jason Mohr, LSD

### **Vote**

10:44:25 Carried 14 - 1 by roll call vote with Rep. Tom France voting no.  
 Rep. Shannon Maness voted aye by proxy.

### **Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:48:38 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
 10:49:09 Sen. John Esp  
 10:49:17 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
 10:49:30 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle  
 10:50:26 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
 10:50:39 Jason Mohr, LSD  
 10:51:45 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

10:51:56 Rep. Steve Gist  
10:52:41 Jim Keane  
10:53:22 Jason Mohr, LSD  
10:53:48 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 10:53:56