



TRANSPORTATION INTERIM COMMITTEE 69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Gregg Hunter
Denley Loge
Andrea Olsen
Russ Tempel

HOUSE MEMBERS

Denise Baum
Curtis Cochran
Chip Fitzpatrick
Greg Kmetz
Zack Wirth

COMMITTEE STAFF

Rebecca Brown – Lead Staff
Joseph Carroll – Legal Staff
Maddelyn Pennington - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

January 23, 2026
Room 102
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.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sen. Russ Tempel, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Chip Fitzpatrick, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Denise Baum (D)
Rep. Curtis Cochran (R)
Sen. Gregg Hunter (R)
Rep. Greg Kmetz (R)
Sen. Denley Loge (R)
Rep. Zack Wirth (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Andrea Olsen (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Becca Brown, Lead Staff
Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff
Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

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

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

08:01:33 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

08:02:24 Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

08:03:31 None

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MOTOR VEHICLES DIVISION (MVD) OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

08:03:48 Laurie Bakri, Administrator, MVD

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

08:07:33 Sen. Andrea Olsen joined the meeting.

Committee Questions / Discussion

08:16:04 Sen. Andrea Olsen

08:16:29 Laurie Bakri, MVD

08:20:30 Rep. Denise Baum

08:21:29 Laurie Bakri, MVD

08:24:08 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

08:24:26 Laurie Bakri, MVD

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT)

Department Updates

08:25:22 Larry Flynn, Deputy Director, MDT

08:32:08 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

Committee Questions / Discussion

08:36:32 Sen. Denley Loge

08:37:19 Larry Flynn, MDT

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued
Highway 212**

08:38:38 Larry Flynn, MDT

Committee Questions / Discussion

08:41:28 Sen. Andrea Olsen

08:43:08 Larry Flynn, MDT

08:48:58 Rep. Greg Kmetz

08:50:34 Larry Flynn, MDT

08:50:51 Russ Christoferson, Enforcement Bureau Chief, Motor Carrier Services Division (MCS)

08:52:14 Sen. Andrea Olsen

08:54:11 Russ Christoferson, MCS

08:54:42 Sen. Denley Loge

08:55:46 Russ Christoferson, MCS

08:56:37 Rep. Denise Baum

08:56:44 Jon Swartz, Operations Manager, MDT

08:59:34 Sen. Denley Loge

09:00:15 Jon Swartz, MDT

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued
English Proficiency**

09:01:13 Larry Flynn, MDT

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:01:22 Sen. Andrea Olsen

09:01:42 Larry Flynn, MDT

09:03:55 Russ Christoferson, MCS

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued**

Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) Fees & Comparison to Other States

09:05:19 Larry Flynn, MDT

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:13:39 Sen. Denley Loge

09:14:11 Larry Flynn, MDT

09:17:00 Sen. Gregg Hunter

09:17:25 Larry Flynn, MDT

09:18:41 Rep. Greg Kmetz

09:18:52 Larry Flynn, MDT

09:19:24 Sen. Andrea Olsen
09:19:58 Larry Flynn, MDT

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued**

Autonomous Vehicles Legislation and Rulemaking (AVs)

09:20:52 Larry Flynn, MDT
09:21:14 Russ Christoferson, MCS

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:23:37 Sen. Andrea Olsen
09:24:36 Russ Christoferson, MCS

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued**

Railroad Crossings

09:27:27 Larry Flynn, MDT
09:28:55 Patricia Burke, Safety Engineer, MDT

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:34:45 Sen. Denley Loge
09:35:08 Patricia Burke, MDT
09:35:22 John Althof, Rail-Highway Safety Manager, MDT
09:36:40 Rep. Denise Baum
09:38:08 John Althof, MDT
09:39:20 Rep. Zack Wirth
09:40:10 John Althof, MDT

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (MDT) –
Continued**

Remaining Questions

09:42:58 Larry Flynn, MDT

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:43:05 None

WESTERN TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE (WTI) INTRODUCTIONS AND OVERVIEW

09:43:32 Dr. Lee Spangler, Interim Director, WTI

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

09:45:06 David Kack, Program Manager, Principal Investigator, WTI

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:49:17 Sen. Andrea Olsen

09:50:11 David Kack, WTI

09:54:09 **Recessed**

10:01:51 **Reconvened**

Public Comment Regarding Agency Oversight / Administrative Rules

10:02:13 None

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 19: INTERIM STUDY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Introductions

10:03:12 Becca Brown, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

10:05:00 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

10:05:18 Chris Fox, Chair, Board of Directors, Bike Walk Montana

10:05:42 Dr. Meg Traci, University of Montana Rural Institute, Montana Disability & Health Program (MTDH)

10:06:40 Becca Brown, LSD

10:06:52 David Carlson, Executive Director, Disability Rights Montana (DR-MT)

10:07:32 Jacob Krissovich, Legislative Director, National Federation of the Blind of Montana (NFB of MT)

10:08:00 Cassie Wick, Ability Montana, Butte

10:08:28 Jacque Lavelle, Western Project Manager, Rails To Trails Conservancy (RTC)

10:09:23 Shyla Patera, North Central Independent Living Services (NCILS), Great Falls

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 19: INTERIM STUDY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -

Continued

Discussion Point 1: Please give a brief overview of the existing public transit services, either in your area of focus, or in your area of the state.

10:10:20 Becca Brown, LSD

10:11:16 Jacob Krissovich, NFB of MT

10:13:08 David Carlson, DR-MT

10:17:12 Dr. Meg Traci, MTDH

10:22:11 Cassie Wick, Ability Montana

10:22:17 Rep. Denise Baum

10:25:37 Jacque Lavelle, RTC

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

10:30:27 Chris Fox, Bike Walk Montana

10:38:04 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

10:38:16 Shyla Patera, NCILS

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:46:01 Rep. Denise Baum

10:47:07 David Carlson, DR-MT

10:53:50 Dr. Meg Traci, MTDH
10:58:31 Sen. Andrea Olsen
11:00:32 Dr. Meg Traci, MTDH
11:02:43 Jacob Krissovich, NFB of MT
11:04:05 Sen. Denley Loge
11:05:29 Sen. Andrea Olsen
11:06:37 Jacque Lavelle, RTC
11:07:30 David Carlson, DR-MT
11:10:51 Shyla Patera, NCILS
11:15:03 Chris Fox, Bike Walk Montana
11:15:27 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
11:15:50 Dr. Meg Traci, MTDH
11:18:00 Rep. Zack Wirth
11:18:17 Sen. Andrea Olsen
11:19:31 Jacque Lavelle, RTC
11:21:12 Cassie Wick, Ability Montana
11:22:31 Jacob Krissovich, NFB of MT
11:24:12 David Carlson, DR-MT
11:27:28 Chris Fox, Bike Walk Montana
11:28:47 Dr. Meg Traci, MTDH
11:32:17 Shyla Patera, NCILS
11:34:03 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 19: INTERIM STUDY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -
Continued**

Research Update

11:34:27 Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff, LSD

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 19: INTERIM STUDY ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION -
Continued**

Public Survey Transportation Questionnaire

11:36:03 Rep. Denise Baum

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:39:00 Sen. Denley Loge

11:39:28 Rep. Denise Baum

11:40:47 Sen. Andrea Olsen

Public Comment Regarding Public Transportation

11:43:53 Lyn Hellegaard, Executive Director, Montana Transit Association (MTA)

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:49:08 Rep. Curtis Cochran
11:50:03 Lyn Hellegaard, MTA
11:50:54 Sen. Andrea Olsen
11:51:15 Lyn Hellegaard, MTA
11:53:24 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
11:53:48 Sen. Andrea Olsen

Public Comment Regarding Public Transportation - Continued

11:55:39 Gina Lytle, Helena
12:06:50 Travis Hoffman, Summit Independent Living

12:10:05 **Recessed**

14:03:49 **Reconvened**

DEBRIEF FROM THE MONTANA HERITAGE CENTER AND I2 WALK/MOVE AUDIT

14:04:47 Becca Brown, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
14:05:15 Rep. Greg Kmetz
14:05:30 Sen. Denley Loge
14:05:51 Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff, LSD
14:06:10 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
14:06:27 Becca Brown, LSD
14:06:56 Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary, LSD
14:07:22 Sen. Gregg Hunter
14:07:55 Rep. Denise Baum
14:09:04 Sen. Andrea Olsen

Public Comment Regarding Montana Heritage Center And I2 Walk/Move Audit

14:10:02 None

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSED RAILROAD MERGER

14:10:24 Lockiel Edwards, Agricultural Producer, Big Sandy
[EXHIBIT 12](#)
14:21:27 John Semple, Montana Grain Growers Association (MGGA)
14:22:18 Matt Jones, Public Affairs Director, BNSF Railway Company

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:24:04 Sen. Denley Loge
14:24:32 Matt Jones, Executive Director, BNSF
14:25:52 Sen. Andrea Olsen
14:26:49 Matt Jones, BNSF

14:28:25 Rep. Denise Baum

Public Comment Regarding Proposed Railroad Merger

14:29:19 Nicole Rolf, Montana Farm Bureau Federation

WRECKERS / TOW TRUCKS

Introduction

14:30:26 Becca Brown, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 13](#)

14:32:30 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

14:32:36 Sen. Andrea Olsen

14:32:52 Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff, LSD

14:33:48 Levi Mossi, Towing & Recovery Professionals of Montana (TRP-MT), Montana Towing

14:34:26 Don Blyton Jr., Billings Towing & Recovery, Montana Tow Truck Association (MTTA)

14:34:39 Carl Halcro, Carl's Auto Care, MTTA

14:34:54 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, Tow Truck Administrator, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP)

14:35:14 Duane Williams, CEO, Montana Trucking Association (MTA)

14:35:30 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA

14:35:49 Josh Graham, Superior Towing & Recovery

WRECKERS / TOW TRUCKS - Continued

Discussion Point 1: Please give a brief overview of the existing wrecker / towing services in your area of the state.

14:36:06 Becca Brown, LSD

14:36:43 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

14:36:56 Levi Mossi, TRP-MT & Montana Towing

14:38:05 Don Blyton Jr., Billings Towing & Recovery, MTTA

14:39:26 Carl Halcro, Carl's Auto Care, MTTA

14:40:14 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, MHP

14:40:56 Duane Williams, MTA

14:42:10 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA

[EXHIBIT 14](#)

[EXHIBIT 15](#)

14:46:01 Josh Graham, Superior Towing & Recovery

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:46:14 Sen. Denley Loge

14:47:26 Don Blyton Jr., Billings Towing & Recovery, MTTA

14:49:29 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA

14:51:53 Rep. Denise Baum

14:52:51 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA
14:54:57 Sen. Andrea Olsen
14:57:36 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, Commissioner of Securities &
Insurance (CSI), State Auditor's Office
[EXHIBIT 16](#)
15:05:15 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, MHP
15:07:53 Sen. Gregg Hunter
15:08:23 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, MHP
15:09:58 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA
15:12:23 Sen. Denley Loge
15:13:51 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, MHP
15:17:03 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA

Public Comment Regarding Wreckers / Tow Trucks

15:19:34 Grant Herden, Circle Sinclair Towing, MTTA
15:24:57 Brad Longcake, MTTA
[EXHIBIT 17](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:27:28 Sen. Gregg Hunter
15:27:34 Brad Longcake, MTTA
15:28:41 Sen. Denley Loge
15:29:21 Sgt. Tammy Perkins, MHP
15:30:22 Scott Wolff, Iron Horse Towing, MTTA
15:31:53 Sen. Andrea Olsen
15:32:45 Trevor Graff, CSI, State Auditor's Office

15:35:38 **Recessed**

15:54:51 **Reconvened**

15:54:52 Vice Presiding Officer Chip Fitzpatrick left the meeting during recess and did not return for the rest of the meeting.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

Public Transportation Survey

15:56:30 Becca Brown, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
(See Exhibit 10)
15:57:38 Rep. Denise Baum

Committee Questions / Discussion

16:00:06 Rep. Curtis Cochran
16:00:24 Rep. Denise Baum

16:01:46 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:02:32 Sen. Denley Loge
16:03:04 Rep. Denise Baum
16:04:13 Sen. Gregg Hunter
16:04:53 Becca Brown, LSD
16:07:14 Rep. Denise Baum
16:08:40 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
16:09:36 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:09:42 Rep. Denise Baum
16:09:47 Sen. Denley Loge

Motion

16:12:49 Rep. Denise Baum moved for the public transportation survey to be adopted and posted by the Transportation Interim Committee once the committee receives feedback from the disability panel regarding accessibility and language.

Vote

16:13:30 Carried 7 – 1 by roll call vote with Rep. Greg Kmetz voting ‘no’.

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued

Railroad Merger

16:14:34 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
16:15:00 Sen. Denley Loge
16:15:37 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
16:16:29 Rep. Denise Baum
16:16:38 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:19:09 Rep. Curtis Cochran
16:23:40 Rep. Denise Baum

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued

Highway 212

16:25:49 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:26:57 Larry Flynn, Deputy Director, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT)
16:28:04 Russ Christoferson, Enforcement Bureau Chief, Motor Carrier Services Division (MCS)
16:29:26 Sen. Denley Loge
16:29:51 Larry Flynn, MDT
16:30:10 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:30:45 Larry Flynn, MDT
16:31:36 Russ Christoferson, MCS

**COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued
Public Transportation Survey**

16:33:33 Rep. Greg Kmetz
16:34:31 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
16:34:49 Sen. Gregg Hunter
16:35:22 Sen. Andrea Olsen

**COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued
Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) Fees**

16:38:14 Sen. Gregg Hunter
16:38:40 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel
16:38:50 Sen. Denley Loge
16:40:03 Rep. Denise Baum
16:40:55 Russ Christoferson, MCS
16:42:20 Rep. Zack Wirth
16:43:06 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY OTHER TOPIC WITHIN THE TIC'S JURISDICTION

16:44:40 None

**COMMITTEE WORK SESSION - Continued
Travel Meeting**

16:45:07 Sen. Andrea Olsen
16:45:19 Presiding Officer Russ Tempel

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:45:38