

Statutory Duties for the Economic Affairs Interim Committee

(more details are available for this overview in the draft Committee work plan)

5-5-215. Duties of interim committees. (1) Each interim committee shall:

(a) review administrative rules within its jurisdiction;

(b) subject to 5-5-217(3), conduct interim studies as assigned;

(c) monitor the operation of assigned executive branch agencies with specific attention to the following:

(i) identification of issues likely to require future legislative attention;

(ii) opportunities to improve existing law through the analysis of problems experienced with the application of the law by an agency; and

(iii) experiences of the state's citizens with the operation of an agency that may be amenable to improvement through legislative action;

Interim Studies:

- SJR 35 - a study of licensing boards
- SJR 38 - a study of identity theft

Administrative Rules and Monitoring for Assigned Agencies:

- the Department of Agriculture
- the Department of Commerce
- the Department of Labor and Industry (including all boards administratively attached to DOLI)
- the Department of Livestock
- the State Auditor's Office
- the Governor's Office of Economic Development

(d) review proposed legislation of assigned agencies or entities as provided in the joint legislative rules; and

(e) accumulate, compile, analyze, and furnish information bearing upon its assignment and relevant to existing or prospective legislation as it determines, on its own initiative, to be pertinent to the adequate completion of its work.

(2) Each interim committee 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.

(3) The legislative services division shall keep accurate records of the activities and proceedings of each interim committee.

New Duties

In addition to the traditional interim committee duties, the following were signed into law requiring:

1. the EAIC presiding officer to name two EAIC members as liaisons to the State Fund, pursuant to Senate Bill 61, and two EAIC members (one from each party), with vice presiding officer concurrence, to the Rail Service Competition Council, pursuant to House Bill 769;
2. scheduling of quarterly progress reports by the Montana Capital Investment Board, once the board begins operations, pursuant to Senate Bill 133;
3. scheduling of a report by September 15, 2006, regarding recommendations from the Board for Alternative Schools for legislation, pursuant to House Bill 628; and
4. a report every 6 months, after December 2005, from the Department of Commerce regarding the status of the grants and program implementation of the worker training program and Indian country economic development program, as noted in House Bill 2.¹

The study resolutions require that interim committee work, including final reports, recommendations, and any proposals for legislation, be completed by September 15, 2006.

¹Governor Brian Schweitzer struck the Department of Commerce reporting language from House Bill 2, and that action now is the subject of a lawsuit as to its constitutionality. Given that the validity of the language is uncertain and that the Department of Commerce is among those entities monitored by the EAIC, the work plan includes reference to the reporting with a note regarding its questionable validity, both from the governor's veto and from the questionable inclusion of substantive reporting language in House Bill 2.