

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

JOINT APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON LONG RANGE PLANNING

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN JACK WELLS**, on February 15, 2005 at 8:00 A.M., in Room 350 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Rep. Jack Wells, Chairman (R)
Sen. John Brueggeman (R)
Sen. Mike Cooney (D)
Rep. Carol C. Juneau (D)
Sen. Bob Keenan (R)
Rep. Ralph L. Lenhart (D)
Rep. John E. Witt (R)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: Sen. Jon Tester, Vice Chairman (D)

Staff Present: Laura Dillon, Committee Secretary
Catherine Duncan, Legislative Branch
Mark Bruno, OBPP

Please Note. These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 540, 2/15/2005
Executive Action:

CHAIRMAN WELLS called the meeting to order and began the hearing on HB 540.

HEARING ON HB 540

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. SUE DICKENSON, HD 25, opened the hearing on **HB 540**, Bonding for Higher Education and Other State Projects.

Proponents' Testimony:

John Bohlinger, Lieutenant Governor, State of Montana, testified on behalf of the executive branch in support for HB 540. The bill is part of the executive vision for the future of Montana.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a01)

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 17.1}

David Ewer, Executive Budget Director, added that the projects included in HB 540 have been identified as statewide priorities.

SEN. BILL TASH, SD 36, explained that his experience on the Reserve Water Right Compact Commission was behind his support for the bill.

REP. JOHN MUSGROVE, HD 34 and **REP. BOB BERGREN, HD 33**, stated that the bill will address important aspects of state infrastructure, like the St. Mary's Project, that have been neglected over the years.

REP. JONATHAN WINDY BOY, HD 32 read testimony on behalf of the Fort Belknap Tribal Council in support of the bill.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a02)

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 17.1 - 26.5}

The following proponents testified on behalf of specific projects included as part of HB 540.

Great Falls College of Technology Project

Mary Moe, Dean, Great Falls College of Technology (COT), said that only one major renovation has been authorized for the COT in the past 17 years. The facility is not large enough to meet the demands of a growing student population. Ms. Moe described the programs currently offered at the COT. The proposed construction

will allow the COT to meet the level of student demand as well as address disability code issues.

{Tape: 1; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 10.4}

Randy Gray, Mayor of Great Falls, added that the COT is an integral part of the City's economy. Many businesses recruit their employees from the COT.

Lance Olson, Cascade County Commissioner; Will Weaver, Montana State University Facility Planning Steering Committee; Mark Semmens, Montana Board of Regents; John Kramer, Great Falls Development Corporation; Richard Owen, Great Falls Chamber of Commerce; Rick Evans, Great Falls Chamber of Commerce; Glenn Bliss, General Distributing, Great Falls; Jack King, North-central Montana Healthcare Alliance; and REP. GEORGE GOLIE, HD 20 went on record in support of the Great Falls COT Project included in HB 540.

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 6.7}

Joe Schaffer, Great Falls COT, testified to the growing demands on technical colleges to supply workforce development for businesses.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a03)

Billings College of Technology Project

John Cech, Dean, Billings COT, stated that Montana is one of the lowest ranking states in the nation for two-year educational opportunities. The Billings COT is facing similar issues with ever-increasing student enrollment. The demand for COT graduates has increased and the college offers an exceptional job placement rate. An investment in the COT infrastructure will increase its capacity to meet growing demands.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a04)

Chris Dimock, OneEighty Communications, submitted written testimony in support of the Billings COT Project included in HB 540.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a05)

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 6.7 - 23.7}

Bruce Whittenberg, Leadership Montana, discussed the partnerships that exist between the school and the private sector.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a06)

{Tape: 2; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 23.7 - 32}

REP. MONICA LINDEEN, HD 43; Jani McCall, Billings Deaconess Clinic; Sharron Kay, Billings COT Student; Steve Wade, Conoco Phillips; Steve Louttit, Wells Fargo Bank, Todd Graetz, Trans Aria Incorporated; Gail Abercrombie, Montana Petroleum Association; and Kevin Famaghetti, Billings COT Alumni, stated their support for the Billings COT Project. The Billings COT has contributed to the community, local economy and offers an alternative to university education.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 18}

Rod Svee, Billings Superintendent of Schools, explained the School District #2 Career Center. Local schools are willing to work with the COT so that students may obtain dual credits.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a07)

Marilyn Olsen, Montana Auto Dealers Association; Craig McKenzie, Vocational Technical Educators of Montana; and Chuck Tooley, Mayor of Billings, went on record in support of the Billings COT Project.

{Tape: 2; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 18 - 27.5}

Helena College of Technology Project

REP. HAL JACOBSON, HD 82, testified that there is a great deal of support within the community for the Helena COT Project to be included in HB 540.

Bob Frazier, Dean, Helena COT, spoke in support of the Helena COT renovation. The project will reduce the number of campus sites, address curriculum changes, realign programs within the campus, and improve partnership opportunities with Montana businesses.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a08)

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 1}

Eric Schindler, Vice President, American Chemet Corporation, claimed that some of the best employees of his business have been

students at the COT. He added that the current low-interest rates make this an ideal time for project bonds to be issued.

Ron Mercer, Helena COT and Rick Hays, QWEST, stated their support of the project. The college is a good economic investment for the community and area businesses.

Jeff Downhour, Mosaic Architecture, stated that he has been working with the Helena COT to identify the best possible renovation plan. Mr. Downhour explained the phases of the project. An unfinished basement space will be part of the new building. This project will allow the college flexibility in accommodating current demands.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 1 - 16.2}

Sheldon Bartel, Gateway Economic Development, and REP. DAVE GALLIK, HD 79, went on record in support of the project.

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 16.2 - 20.5}

Montana Tech Project

Susan Patton, Vice Chancellor, Montana Tech, explained that the proposed building project would house both the Petroleum Engineering Program and the Bureau of Mines and Geology. This will replace the existing building on campus, which is over 100 years old and deteriorating. The college has been advised that it will be more efficient to look for new space, rather than attempt to repair the existing building.

[EXHIBIT\(jlh37a09\)](#)

{Tape: 3; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 20.5 - 26}

Ed Deal, Montana Bureau of Mines and Technology, explained the various problems associated with the general structural deterioration of the existing building.

[EXHIBIT\(jlh37a10\)](#)

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 5.8}

Marlene Moon, Liberty County Conservation District, added that the Bureau of Mines and Geology is regarded as one of the best sources for watershed data.

John Evans, Department of Petroleum Engineers, Montana Tech, discussed how Montana Tech contributes to the oil and gas industry within Montana and around the world.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a11)

REP. GEORGE GROESBECK, HD 74; REP. JON SESSO, HD 76; and Darren Gollehon, Montana Tech Student, stated their support for the project. Projected petroleum revenue increases would create a return greater than the cost of constructing a new building.

{Tape: 3; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 5.8 - 23}

Fort Belknap Water Project

Susan Cottingham, Montana Reserve Water Rights Commission, distributed a handout explaining the water compact and proposed project.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a12)

Randy Perez, Fort Belknap Tribal Council, and Chris Tweeten, Reserve Water Rights Compact Commission, stated their support for the project.

Larry Mires, Two Rivers Economic Growth, recognized those audience members who attended the meeting to show their support for the Saint Mary's Project. Mr. Mires went to say that the state must authorize bonding before the project will receive any Federal funding assistance. He urged the committee to support funding for both the Saint Mary's Project and Fort Belknap Water Compact.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 10.4}

Max Maddox and Gary Anderson, Saint Mary's Working Group, went on record in support of funding for the project.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 10.4 - 16}

Montana State University Projects

Geoff Gamble, President, Montana State University (MSU), went over projects that MSU wishes to have included in HB 540. These include renovation of Gaines Hall and several deferred maintenance projects.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a13)

David Dooley, Interim Provost, MSU, added his support for the project. (See Exhibit 12 for written testimony.)

Megan Dumas, Associated Students of Montana State University, submitted letters in support of the projects on behalf of MSU students.

EXHIBIT(jlh37a14)

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 16 - 24}

Jeff Jacobsen, MSU College of Agriculture; John Youngberg, Montana Farm Bureau Federation; Richard Owen, Montana Grain Growers Association; Barbara Broberg, Montana Women Involved in Farm Economics; Pam Langley, Montana Agriculture Business Association; and Sheila Stearns, Commissioner of Higher Education gave their support for the bill. They discussed the importance of agriculture and the inclusion of the Agriculture Experiment Station Project within HB 540.

{Tape: 4; Side: A; Approx. Time Counter: 24 - 31.5}

Opponents' Testimony: none.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses: none.

Closing by Sponsor:

REP. DICKENSON stated that the number of people who had come to testify demonstrates how important the projects included in HB 540 are to the state. She recommended that the committee pass the bill in its current form.

{Tape: 4; Side: B; Approx. Time Counter: 0 - 8}

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 12:05 P.M.

REP. JACK WELLS, Chairman

LAURA DILLON, Secretary

JW/ld

Additional Exhibits:

EXHIBIT ([j1h37aad0.PDF](#))