

MINUTES

**MONTANA SENATE
59th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE BILL 2

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN MIKE COONEY**, on April 14, 2005 at
5:40 P.M., in Room 317 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Mike Cooney, Chairman (D)
Rep. Rosalie (Rosie) Buzzas, Chairman (D)
Sen. John Cobb (R)
Rep. Eve Franklin (D)
Rep. John Sinrud (R)
Sen. Jon Tester (D)
Rep. Jack Wells (R)

Members Excused: None.

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Prudence Gildroy, Committee Secretary
Taryn Purdy, Legislative Branch

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

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing & Date Posted: HB 2, 4/14/2005
Executive Action:

CHAIRMAN MIKE COONEY advised the committee would meet the following day upon adjournment. He noted there is an effort to wrap up Legislative business by mid-week.

SEN. EVE FRANKLIN asked about the process for agency amendments. **Taryn Purdy, Legislative Services**, advised giving them to staff and then staff will write them. She encouraged the committee to get amendments to the staff as soon as they can.

REP. JOHN SINRUD said he and **REP. JACK WELLS** just found out they were on the free conference committee and have been struggling to find out what has taken place in the transformation of HB 2 from the House to the Senate. He asked that meet on Saturday after session giving them all day on Friday to review and craft amendments. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** said that is a fair request and his only concern is meeting time-lines. **SEN. FRANKLIN** suggested there are a number of technical amendments that have no policy implications. She thought the committee could get some of those out of the way and then work on policy issues on Saturday. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** asked **SEN. JON TESTER** about the schedule on Saturday. **SEN. TESTER** thought the Senate should be out by noon on Saturday.

SEN. WELLS remarked if they were to proceed by section in HB 2, since neither he nor **REP. SINRUD** worked on all sections in House Appropriations and they are trying to digest a lot of material. In order to accommodate this time frame, he suggested taking one section late Friday to give them time to work on the more detailed sections and get into that on a later day. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** indicated he had not served on this free conference committee before and tried to get an historical perspective on how it has been done in the past. It is his understanding that it is free-flowing and not done section by section. He did not have a problem with looking at a particular section, but he suspected they would revisit sections again before they are done. He said they would not be closing sections. He said there were not many technical amendments and those could be done the following day. He asked what section the committee would like to start with. **REP. SINRUD** suggested starting with Section A. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** asked if they would have many amendments in Section A. **REP. SINRUD** said that would depend on his review.

SEN. TESTER asked about the technical amendments and whether that includes contingent amendments. **Ms. Purdy** said it does not. **SEN. TESTER** asked how many contingent amendments are applicable at this point in time. **Ms. Purdy** thought it was about ten. **SEN. TESTER** thought that would enable the committee to address Section A the next day.

SEN. COBB said there are only four amendments currently for Section A. He asked **REP. SINRUD** and **REP. WELLS** if they wanted a packet of the technical amendments to look at before the committee meets tomorrow. He wondered if they want to address the contingency amendments by section. He thought they would be done with Section A quickly. He thought the ones they want to spend time on are the cuts. **REP. SINRUD** said they would like a list of the technical amendments for all sections and they can digest Section A. They would also like a list of all contingent bills currently in HB 2. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** said the intention would be to meet the next afternoon to take care of technical amendments and Section A.

REP. ROSIE BUZZAS asked about the possibility of getting into another section if they get through Section A and the technical amendments quickly. She preferred to work as late as they need to.

SEN. COBB said **REP. SINRUD** requested a list of the contingent bills. The Friday meeting would include the technical and contingent amendments and Section A. That will narrow it down to what they are going to fight over.

CHAIRMAN COONEY, in addressing **REP. BUZZAS'** question, said they have to play that by ear. **REP. SINRUD** AND **REP. WELLS** requested additional time to look at the other sections and he wants to respect that and give them that opportunity. He stressed time is of the essence but agreed with addressing the technical and contingent amendments along with Section A. The committee will meet again on Saturday and possibly Sunday. **REP. WELLS** indicated they are not prepared right now to request all the amendments they want to do. They cannot supply that list in the morning and be ready by Friday evening. He thought they could get to Section A and they will review the technical and contingent amendments. Other than that they are not prepared to get amendments drafted soon enough and need more time than that. **CHAIRMAN COONEY** said he knew that they will make a commitment to move this along as quickly as they can. The committee will reach a point where they have to get going, and as chairman he will see that happens.

SEN. TESTER commented they should try to get this wrapped up by Saturday night so it can be read across the rostrum and second and third votes can be taken. He thinks it can be done.

CHAIRMAN COONEY said the committee would be in recess until the call of the chair. He said he intends to call the meeting back in order tomorrow afternoon upon adjournment.

RECESS

Recess: 6:00 P.M.

SEN. MIKE COONEY, Chairman

Prudence Gildroy , Secretary

MC/pg