



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WAYS TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT, RECOGNITION, AND COORDINATION OF STATE PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AND HERITAGE RESOURCE PROGRAMS OPERATED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA.

WHEREAS, state parks, outdoor recreation, and heritage resources are vitally important to families, communities, and the tourism economy of Montana; and

WHEREAS, Montana is blessed with some of the greatest resources in the United States; and

WHEREAS, 20 years of studies and reports identifying the need to improve the management, image, and organization of Montana's state parks have resulted in limited success; and

WHEREAS, well-managed boating, snowmobiling, and off-highway vehicle programs are important to Montana citizens as a form of thrift and in supporting a healthy tourism economy; and

WHEREAS, Montana state parks have magnificent natural, cultural, and recreational resources that require management for multiple uses; and

WHEREAS, the mission and management objectives for state parks may differ from many other programs administered by the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and need to be raised in priority and focus; and

WHEREAS, use of state parks by Montana residents has increased 78% since 2002; and

WHEREAS, demands for services at those parks and conservation of park resources need to be balanced; and

WHEREAS, hunting and fishing license dollars cannot be used to operate park and recreation programs; and

WHEREAS, cities and counties also work to provide for and coordinate strong outdoor recreation programs to maintain healthy communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

(1) review audits and studies related to the management, support, and funding of state parks and outdoor recreational and heritage resource programs;

(2) evaluate the priority, organizational structure, and management of Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks programs related to state parks, boating, off-highway vehicles, and snowmobiling;

(3) evaluate the relationship between state, city, county, and federal park and recreation programs and provide recommendations for improving statewide coordination and communication between these programs;

(4) identify methods to improve the management of state parks and recreational and heritage resources for Montana citizens while supporting local communities and their economic health;

(5) compile and review information on other state park and recreational systems in the Rocky Mountain region, including their organizational structure, management, and governance;

(6) recommend changes to improve the balance, effectiveness, and priority of parks, recreation, and heritage resource stewardship in Montana; and

(7) propose legislation for consideration by the 63rd Legislature that:

(a) raises the awareness, professionalism, and priority of state parks and recreational programs in Montana; and

(b) establishes a state parks and recreation board that fosters additional citizen involvement and oversight of these programs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study results in a recommendation that the administration of state parks be moved out of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, it be done with the intent to consolidate and improve the effectiveness of state park and recreation program management.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the study involve the participation of recreation user groups, local, state, federal, and tribal stakeholders, including city officials, county commissioners, national park service representatives, heritage resource professionals, and other stakeholders interested in state park and recreation program management.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review

requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 63rd Legislature.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within joint resolution,
HJ 0032, originated in the House.

Chief Clerk of the House

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2011.

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2011.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32

INTRODUCED BY P. CONNELL

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF WAYS TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT, RECOGNITION, AND COORDINATION OF STATE PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION AND HERITAGE RESOURCE PROGRAMS OPERATED BY THE STATE OF MONTANA.