

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 32

2 INTRODUCED BY P. CONNELL

3

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

8

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27

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

30 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory

1 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
29 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2012.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

1 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 63rd Legislature.

2 - END -