_____ JOINT RESOLUTION NO. _____

INTRODUCED BY _____

(Primary Sponsor)

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF BICYCLE TRAIL ROUTES IN MONTANA.

WHEREAS, studies show that bicycle tourism is an increasingly important component of the tourism industry and that states such as Oregon estimate cyclists contribute over $400 million annually to the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, many western states, including Washington, Oregon, and Colorado are investing heavily in constructing bicycle trails and other bike-friendly infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, national biking organizations are promoting trails across Montana with minimal consultation of Montana state government or Montana’s tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, the League of American Bicyclists 2019 survey of bike-friendly states ranks Montana 46th in the nation on metrics that include investment in infrastructure, bike-friendly policies, and tourism promotion, while Washington State ranks first, Oregon ranks second, Colorado ranks seventh, and Utah ranks eighth; and

WHEREAS, federal funding for the construction of bicycle trails and other infrastructure will likely become available through congressional action on infrastructure and transportation legislation.

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) evaluate Montana's policies to promote bicycle tourism;

(2) evaluate the potential for established paved bicycle routes in Montana, including but not limited to a paved route parallel to U.S. Highway 2, Montana Highway 200, and Interstate 90 for suitability. Each route should be evaluated and prioritized for its economic development and tourism opportunities as well as view shed and overall user experience.

(2) review efforts by other entities, including Rails to Trails, to create bicycle trail routes in Montana and how the state might support those efforts and tie a route across Montana into those existing trails; and

(3) analyze funding options to establish and maintain a paved bicycle trail across Montana, including potential state and federal revenue as well as the possibility of establishing annual user or bicycle licensing fees.

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, 2022.

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 68th Legislature.

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