

MINUTES

**MONTANA SENATE
56th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

Call to Order: By **CHAIRMAN ARNIE MOHL**, on April 8, 1999 at 3:16 P.M., in Room 410 Capitol.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Arnie Mohl, Chairman (R)
Sen. Mack Cole (R)
Sen. Bob DePratu (R)
Sen. John Hertel (R)
Sen. Reiny Jabs (R)
Sen. Greg Jergeson (D)
Sen. Glenn Roush (D)
Sen. Spook Stang (D)

Members Excused: Sen. Ric Holden, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. Debbie Shea (D)
Sen. Daryl Toews (R)

Members Absent: None.

Staff Present: Connie Erickson, Legislative Branch
Phoebe Olson, Committee Secretary

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

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: HB 648, 4/1/1999
Executive Action: HB 648

HEARING ON HB 648

Sponsor: REPRESENTATIVE RED MENAHAN, HD 54, Anaconda

Proponents:

Colonel Craig Reap, MT Highway Patrol

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REPRESENTATIVE RED MENAHAN, HD 54, Anaconda, submitted written testimony. EXHIBIT(his76a01) And gave the committee a handout. EXHIBIT(his76a02)

Proponents' Testimony:

Colonel Craig Reap, MT Highway Patrol, submitted written testimony, EXHIBIT(his76a03)

Informational Testimony:

Dean Roberts, MT Department of Justice, said they would be the ones to administer any new plate issues. He made himself available for questions.

Jerome Anderson, 3M Company, made himself available to answer questions.

Questions from Committee Members and Responses:

SENATOR JABS, asked what was bid out, if the license plates were made in the prisons.

Dean Roberts, replied that the reflective sheeting and the equipment was sent out for bid.

SENATOR COLE, said in the past all cost associated with plates were incurred by the Department of Justice, he asked if that money was appropriated.

Dean Roberts, replied there had always been an appropriation for any license plate bill. Under the law a set of plates cost \$2 and the cost of the plates are \$1.04 so there is a return to the General Fund.

SENATOR COLE, asked if he lost his plates if he paid for a new set.

Dean Roberts, replied that was correct he would have to pay \$2.

SENATOR COLE, asked if there were new license plates or not if the prison would continue the work they were doing.

Dean Roberts, replied that was correct.

SENATOR DEPRATU, asked if they moved the plates up a year if they could eliminate the cost in the fiscal note.

Dean Roberts, replied they could.

SENATOR DEPRATU, asked if there wouldn't be an increase in cash flow with the authorization of new plates.

Dean Roberts, said there would be about a 7% increase.

SENATOR DEPRATU, asked if the sponsor would have a problem with moving the date ahead one year.

REPRESENTATIVE MENAHAN, replied he would like to do that.

SENATOR ROUSH, asked if people would be able to keep their old numbers.

Dean Roberts, said personalized plate owners would be contacted, but the likelihood of getting your old number was slim.

SENATOR ROUSH, asked if Centennial Plates would still be available.

Dean Roberts, replied they would still be available.

SENATOR MOHL, asked why the Department needed \$90,000.

Dean Roberts, said that money went for programming costs and shipping costs. He said they shipped 1.3 million plates to the counties and it was quite expensive.

SENATOR MOHL, thought the programming costs were in the Department of Corrections. He thought a sufficient amount of money had been appropriated for additional materials for the Department of Corrections. He commented that the fiscal note was staggering even though it might be a good idea. He wondered if this meant you would get a new plate every year.

Dean Roberts, said it was only one new plate in the year 20001.

SENATOR MOHL, suggested that it might be a good idea to require a new plate every 3 or 4 years.

Closing by Sponsor:

REPRESENTATIVE MENAHAN, said he would not object to that, but it would be hard to come up with the money. He hope that the ideas could be researched to pass the bill without such a huge expenditure of the General Fund.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HB 648

Motion: **SEN. STANG** moved that **HB 648 DO PASS.**

Discussion:

SENATOR DEPRATU, said he was a believer in requiring new plates, and liked the idea of every four to five years. He offered a conceptual amendment to change the date to 2001 instead of 2002 to eliminate the hit on the General Fund. **EXHIBIT (his76a04)**

SENATOR MOHL, asked Connie if an amendment could be added to change it that you had to have new plates every four years.

SENATOR COLE, move to amend HB 648 see (Exhibit 4).

SENATOR MOHL, said he would like to have the bill stay alive but he couldn't support the bill if the fiscal note stayed the same.

SENATOR JERGESON, said a loan could be set up from the General Fund but it would look like a reduction in the ending fund balance unless they did it the way **SENATOR DEPRATU** had suggested.

SENATOR MOHL, said he didn't think they couldn't obligate money for the next biennium.

Connie Erickson, said she thought **SENATOR DEPRATU'S** amendment would begin collecting the money in this biennium.

SENATOR STANG, asked if there wouldn't have to be a partial appropriation because the fiscal year ends June 30th and you would have a half of year that you wouldn't have collected money.

SENATOR DEPRATU, suggested they have new plates for the year 2000.

SENATOR JERGESON, said he thought if **SENATOR COLE AND SENATOR DEPRATU'S** amendments were passed they could ask the Legislative Fiscal Analyst to figure out how to insert the fix in HB 2.

REPRESENTATIVE MENAHAN, said maybe they could borrow the money from the industries program.

SENATOR STANG, said if they took the appropriations out and changed the applicability date to December 31, 1999 they could put the proper language in HB 2.

SENATOR DEPRATU, said the people of Montana would probably appreciate having a new plate for the year 2000.

Vote: Motion **carried unanimously.**

Motion: **SEN. STANG** moved **CHANGE THE APPLICABILITY DATE TO DECEMBER 31, 1999.**

Discussion:

Connie Erickson, asked if the Department of Corrections would be able to produce plates that fast.

SENATOR JABS, asked if people could get their plates before they were due.

Dean Roberts, replied they could not.

Vote: Motion **carried unanimously.**

Motion: **SEN. DEPRATU** moved **TO HAVE A FOUR YEAR CYCLE FOR ISSUING NEW PLATES.**

Discussion:

Dean Roberts, thought that could be done but when the legislature would have to appropriate the money they would probably say they did not want a new plate.

SENATOR JABS, asked if it cost the owner of the car money to replace the plates.

SENATOR STANG, said they were charged \$10 if they got new plates or not.

Vote: Motion **carried 8-1 with Jabs voting no.**

*{Tape : 1; Side : B; Approx. Time Counter : 355; Comments : turn
tape over}*

**Motion/Vote: SEN. STANG moved SB 648 AS AMENDED DO PASS. Motion
carried 9-2 with Holden and Tows voting no.**

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 4:00 P.M.

SEN. ARNIE MOHL, Chairman

PHOEBE OLSON, Secretary

AM/PO

EXHIBIT (his76aad)