

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39  
INTRODUCED BY R. ERICKSON

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PURSUING COMMERCIALIZATION PROJECTS WITH EXISTING RESEARCH UNITS WITHIN THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM.

WHEREAS, Montana's economy has a long history of expansion and retraction that continues to the present day because of the volatility of extraction and agricultural markets; and

WHEREAS, Montana has one of the lowest levels of per capita income in the nation and has a negative 160% outmigration of college graduates; and

WHEREAS, research universities across the country have proved that academic research in sciences and technology can be commercialized into products and businesses that provide high paying jobs that retain and recruit the brightest minds; and

WHEREAS, the University System in the State of Montana is not in a competitive position relative to other state's university systems with regard to research facilities and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, businesses born out of research and commercialization efforts are typically light manufacturers, including those that produce solely an intellectual product, thus bringing in much needed financial gains to the state with little impact to natural amenities; and

WHEREAS, the creation of high paying jobs in the high-tech sector will have a positive economic satellite effect to other job sectors and the state economy as a whole.

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:

- (1) to study the potential economic development that can arise from high-tech and biotech research; and
- (2) to include as a component of this study the appropriate degree of state financial contribution to research projects in the Montana University System, including:
  - (a) establishing a universitywide technology transfer office;

- (b) building research buildings and core facilities and providing for the maintenance of these structures;
  - (c) providing support for technically trained personnel to provide service on and to maintain state-of-the-art equipment necessary for research;
  - (d) providing fellowships to support postdoctoral personnel and graduate students in research programs;
- and
- (e) providing startup funds for new research faculties to allow those faculties to initially equip and start research laboratories.

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 presentations and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2008.

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 61st Legislature.

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