

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15
INTRODUCED BY M. MILBURN

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF AND FUNDING SOURCES FOR A MONETARY INCENTIVE PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE AND COMPENSATE PRIVATE LANDOWNERS WHO GRANT PUBLIC ACCESS TO THEIR PROPERTY FOR RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM-RELATED ACTIVITIES.

WHEREAS, recreational and tourism-related activities, including access to public and private lands for camping, picnicking, canoeing, viewing wildlife and scenery, boating, hiking, bicycling, and four-wheeling, are of great benefit to all Montanans and the state economy; and

WHEREAS, a respectful balance should be struck between the goals of providing public access and preserving private property rights; and

WHEREAS, there is concern that public access to an increasing number of private acres is in jeopardy, as private landowners utilize other income generators on their property that preclude allowing public access for recreational and tourism-related activities; and

WHEREAS, providing monetary incentives to private landowners has proven an effective tool through the block management and hunting and fishing access enhancement programs of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to secure public access for hunters and anglers; and

WHEREAS, providing monetary incentives to private landowners who grant public access for recreational and tourism-related activities could be an effective tool for enhancing these opportunities in the state, as well as a less expensive alternative to current state efforts to obtain public access by purchasing property or easements that allow public access to private property.

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, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to evaluate THE FEASIBILITY OF AND possible funding sources for creating a program, similar in mission to the block management and hunting and fishing access enhancement programs of the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, that would provide monetary incentives

on a per-user-day basis to private landowners who grant public access to their property for recreational and tourism-related activities.

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, 2010.

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 62nd Legislature.

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