

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

INTRODUCED BY M. PHILLIPS

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A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO INVESTIGATE THE IMPACTS OF PHASING OUT AND ELIMINATING THE MINING AND BURNING OF COAL IN MONTANA.

WHEREAS, the federal government is developing national programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and these programs will require individual state responsibility in certain areas; and

WHEREAS, the mining and burning of coal in Montana is a significant part of Montana's economy and is a significant fiscal resource for the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Montana's lawmakers decades ago formulated a plan intended to ensure continuing benefits to the people of the state by taxing coal to finance impact mitigation assistance, to help pay the current expenses of state and local government, and to accumulate a permanent trust to partially replicate the value of coal; and

WHEREAS, regulation of greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and environment of Montana; and

WHEREAS, Montana residents need to better understand the economic and ecological impacts of reducing and eliminating the mining and burning of coal in order to plan for the future; and

WHEREAS, Montana must prepare and plan for the replacement of all coal as an energy and mining resource.

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:

(1) compare and contrast the economic and ecological impacts of phasing out the burning of coal at generation facilities in Montana and phasing out the mining of coal in Montana, including an analysis of the impacts of phasing out coal mining and coal-fired generation over a 15-year period on:

- (a) individual economic sectors;
- (b) Montana's existing electrical generation;



1 (c) the health of Montana residents; and

2 (d) Montana's environment;

3 (2) assess the potential use of alternative energy resources in Montana to replace the use of coal-fired
4 generation, accounting for the economic and ecological impacts;

5 (3) outline measures to minimize economic impacts to communities that rely on coal-fired generation and
6 coal mining opportunities in Montana, taking into account reductions in property tax revenue and benefits such
7 as reduced burdens on public health services;

8 (4) assess the role of the coal severance tax in Montana's future and the financial ramifications of phasing
9 out coal mining in Montana; and

10 (5) assess Montana's overall competitiveness in a carbon-constrained environment.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the examination include recommendations on how Montana can
12 break its reliance on coal.

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

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
16 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2016.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
18 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 65th Legislature.

19 - END -