_____ 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 MONTANA'S COAL SEVERANCE TAX TRUST FUND.

WHEREAS, as directed by Article IX, section 5, of the Montana Constitution, the coal severance tax trust fund receives 50% of total coal severance tax collections, and the money flows through five subtrust funds; and

WHEREAS, the other 50% of the coal severance tax revenue is distributed to several funds outside of the coal severance tax trust fund; and

WHEREAS, coal severance tax dollars are used to assist with local government infrastructure projects, the Treasure State Endowment Program, regional water systems, the Big Sky Economic Development Program, long-range building, state parks, funding for renewable resource projects, and a variety of other programs important to the State of Montana; and

WHEREAS, as Montana looks into the future, faced with infrastructure challenges and spiraling expenses, the state must determine how best to continue to grow the principal in the coal severance tax trust fund and how best to devote resources from the fund to these challenges.

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) review uses of the coal severance tax and utilization of the coal severance tax trust fund;

(2) determine projected infrastructure costs in the state and how, if at all, the coal severance tax trust fund can be used to pay for those costs;

(3) review forecasts for coal extraction in Montana and what those numbers mean for the coal severance tax trust fund;

(4) analyze energy resources in Montana and review potential severance or production taxes to assist in protecting the fund; and

(5) assess whether the Legislature should revisit the current allocations and uses of the funds, including the principal.

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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