



Select Committee on Efficiency in Government

62nd Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

JON SONJU--Chair
EDWARD BUTTREY
MARY CAFERRO
JIM KEANE
EDWARD WALKER
DAVID WANZENRIED

HOUSE MEMBERS

MARK BLASDEL
RON EHLI
GALEN HOLLENBAUGH
PAT NOONAN
SCOTT REICHNER
KATHLEEN WILLIAMS

COMMITTEE STAFF TEAM

DAVE BOHYER, Lead Staff
DAVID NISS, Staff Attorney
DAWN FIELD, Secretary
SUE O'CONNELL, LSD, Health Care
SONJA NOWAKOWSKI, LSD, Nat'l Res.
QUINN HOLZER, LFD, Health Care
TARYN PURDY, LFD, Budgeting Process
BARBARA SMITH, LFD, Technology
LOIS STEINBECK, LFD, Health Care

December 19, 2011

To: SCEG members
From: Sonja Nowakowski, SCEG natural resources staff
Re: January meeting

With the New Year upon us, SCEG members will be kicking off the first chapter in their discussion of natural resources during the January meeting. House Bill 642 outlines natural resource policy issues ranging from permitting and taxation to incentives and advanced technologies. It will be up to SCEG members to focus this portion of the study and to determine what areas are most worthy of discussion and review.

Staff worked to invite speakers to the January meeting who can provide members with a broad overview of regulatory processes, often referred to as permitting, for the natural resources industry in Montana. When the committee narrows its area of study, additional speakers and perspectives will need to be brought to the table.

To start the discussion, and at the suggestion of Representative Williams, you are receiving a copy of the Environmental Quality Council's "Montana Index of Environmental Permits." EQC staff is in the process of updating the document for its 2012 publication.

The index, first published in 1976, is prepared each interim by EQC staff and executive branch natural resource agencies to provide a complete list of the permits and licenses needed to conduct activities that may affect the state's environment. The index lists the required permits, the permitting agencies, and the statutes and rules that regulate each permit. It is noteworthy that in the context of the index, permit includes any action that requires the approval of an executive agency and has the potential to affect natural resources. Permits then encompass actions ranging from air quality permits and geothermal leases on state lands to hunting licenses and bee keeping.

Staff will provide you with additional information about the index during the January meeting. As you review the index in advance of the meeting and listen to the January speakers, staff would ask that SCEG members start thinking about how best to proceed with this portion of your study.

A few questions to consider:

- What specific natural resource or resources (coal, natural gas, oil, wind, fish and wildlife, state lands, etc.) should be the focus of the SCEG's overall approach to this portion of the study?
- Is there a particular regulatory process or permit that should be the focus of the SCEG's permitting discussion? (air quality, major facility siting, oil and gas, strip or underground mining, etc.)
- In your opinion what inefficiencies or redundancies plague specific regulatory processes or permits?
- Should the committee focus on technological opportunities, i.e. online permits and reporting, to improve regulatory processes?
- Based on the questions above, who should the committee hear from in February?

I look forward to seeing you all in January. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me anytime.

Sonja Nowakowski

Research Analyst

Montana Legislative Services Division

Room 171C, State Capitol

PO Box 201704

Helena, MT 59620-1704

Phone: (406) 444-3078

Fax: (406) 444-3971

Email: snowakowski@mt.gov

CI0429 1347slxa.