



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE

68th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Kenneth Bogner
Steve Fitzpatrick
Shane Morigeau
Mark Noland

HOUSE MEMBERS

Jonathan Karlen
Joshua Kassmier
Brandon Ler
Jennifer Lynch
Ron Marshall
Nelly Nicol

COMMITTEE STAFF

Daniel Rosenberg- Secretary
Erin Sullivan - Research Analyst
Jameson Walker - Attorney

MINUTES LOG

January 17, 2024
Capitol Room 137 & Zoom
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Joshua Kassmier, Chair (R)
Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R)
Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick (R)
Rep. Jonathan Karlen (D)
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)
Rep. Ron Marshall (R)
Rep. Nelly Nicol (R)
Sen. Mark Noland (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Jennifer Lynch (D)
Sen. Shane Morigeau (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Daniel Rosenberg, Secretary
Erin Sullivan, Research Analyst
Jameson Walker, Attorney

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

COMMITTEE ACTION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

08:16:13 Presiding Officer Kassmier called the meeting to order at 8:16 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

OVERVIEW OF THE MEETING AGENDA

08:17:17 Presiding Officer Kassmier

CHILDCARE & THE WORKFORCE

Overview of Topic and Introduction of Presenters

08:17:27 Erin Sullivan, Research Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 13](#)

[EXHIBIT 14](#)

[EXHIBIT 15](#)

[EXHIBIT 16](#)

Availability Strategies

08:19:39 Liane Taylor, Business MT Division Administrator, Department of Commerce (DOC)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

08:20:29 Rep. Ler joined the meeting.

08:22:28 Caitlin Jensen, Executive Director, Zero to Five Montana

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

08:27:35 Christine Miller-Fitzpatrick, Owner, Larch Early Childhood Care

08:32:02 Erin Sullivan

08:32:21 Angie Armour, Executive Director, Raise Montana

08:36:11 Tori Sproles, Executive Director, Child Care Connections

08:39:03 Frank Cote, Deputy Insurance Commissioner, State Auditor' Office

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

08:45:30 Todd O'Hair, President and CEO, Montana Chamber of Commerce

08:52:07 Kristina Miller, Government & Employer Solutions, Wonderschool

Committee Questions/ Discussion

08:57:01 Sen. Bogner directed a question to Christine Miller-Fitzpatrick.

08:58:30 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Christine Miller-Fitzpatrick and Caitlin Jensen

09:02:12 Rep. Nicol directed a question to Christine Miller-Fitzpatrick.

09:04:14 Sen. Bogner directed a question to Kristina Miller.

09:06:05 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Caitlin Jensen.

09:07:39 Rep. Marshall directed a question to Kristina Miller and Caitlin Jensen.

Accessibility Strategies

09:10:58 Presiding Officer Kassmier

09:11:22 Tracy McIntyre, Executive Director, Montana Cooperative Development Center
[EXHIBIT 4](#)
 09:13:50 Chad Moore, SBDC State Director, DOC
 09:17:52 Jason Nitschke, Senior Child Care Business Advisor, Zero to Five Montana
 09:19:41 Tori Sproles
 09:24:54 Todd O'Hair
 09:25:16 Kristina Miller
 09:26:01 Carrie Krepps, Executive Director, Florence Crittenton
 09:29:48 Caitlin Jensen
 09:35:59 Vaughn Zenko, Executive Director, SMART and Baker Child Care Project
 09:42:02 Sally Henkel, Coordinator, Missoula Child Care Advantage
 09:44:32 David Trost, CEO, St. Johns United

Committee Questions/ Discussion

09:49:19 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Sally Henkel.
 09:50:46 Sen. Fitzpatrick directed a question to David Trost.
 09:52:56 Sen. Fitzpatrick directed a question to Kristina Miller, Tori Sproles, Caitlin Jensen, Carrie Krepps and Chad Moore.

RECESS

10:00:25 Reconvened at 10:10 a.m.

CHILDCARE AND THE WORKFORCE

Achievement Strategies

10:10:57 Amy Watson, Senior Economist, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)
[EXHIBIT 5](#)
[EXHIBIT 31](#) (PowerPoint presentation)
 10:19:43 Dr. Christine Lux, Associate Professor, Child Development Center Director, Montana State University (MSU)
[EXHIBIT 30](#) (PowerPoint presentation)
 10:31:53 Taylor Boylan, Director, Montana Early Childhood Project
 10:34:23 Dawn Zimdars, Special Projects Coordinator, Montana Early Childhood Project
 10:35:41 Rachel Supalla, CEO, Discovery Kidzone Learning Centers
 10:38:42 Carrie Krepps
 10:43:55 Tracy McIntyre, Executive Director, Montana Cooperative Development Center
 10:47:06 Angie Armour
 10:50:52 Caitlin Jensen
[EXHIBIT 6](#)
[EXHIBIT 7](#)
[EXHIBIT 8](#)
[EXHIBIT 9](#)
[EXHIBIT 10](#)

Committee Questions/ Discussion

10:54:30 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Amy Watson and Dawn Zimdars.
 10:57:04 Rep. Nicol directed a question to Carrie Krepps.

Affordability Strategies

10:58:52 Presiding Officer Kassmier
10:59:46 Tracy Moseman, Division Administrator, Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)
[EXHIBIT 11](#)
11:14:58 Carrie Krepps
[EXHIBIT 12](#)
11:24:57 Tori Sproles

Committee Questions/ Discussion

11:32:47 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Tracy Moseman.
11:33:54 Rep. Karlen directed a question to Tracy Moseman.

Public Comment

11:36:45 Amanda Frickle, Political Director, American Federation of Labor & Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL CIO)
11:42:59 Rachel Prevost, Member Services, Government Affairs Director, Montana Farmer's Union

Committee Questions/ Discussion

11:45:01 Presiding Officer Kassmier
11:45:09 Rep. Ler
11:45:18 Rep. Karlen
11:45:34 Erin Sullivan
11:46:27 Dr. Christine Lux
11:47:49 Sen. Noland
11:48:50 Erin Sullivan
11:49:05 Presiding Officer Kassmier

RECESS

11:49:25 Reconvened at 1:06 p.m.

AGRICULTURE STUDY TOPIC: AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

Overview of Topic & Introduction of Presenters

13:06:39 Erin Sullivan

Agriculture Production Metrics

13:08:42 Dan Kayser, Data Analyst, LSD
[EXHIBIT 17](#)
[EXHIBIT 18](#) (Agricultural Trends online data tool)
13:18:43 Erin Sullivan

Briefing on Meatpacking & Processing

13:31:41 Erin Sullivan
[EXHIBIT 19](#)
[EXHIBIT 20](#)

[EXHIBIT 21](#)

Livestock Production & CIS Program

13:37:14 Mike Honeycutt, Administrator, Department of Livestock

Committee Questions/ Discussion

13:58:23 Sen. Bogner

13:59:04 Sen. Fitzpatrick

14:00:00 Rep. Ler

14:01:27 Rep. Ler

14:03:36 Rep. Ler

Agriculture Grown Incentives & Programs

14:06:05 Zach Coccoli, Deputy Director, Department of Agriculture

[EXHIBIT 22](#)

Public Comment

14:14:18 None

Committee Questions/ Discussion

14:14:36 Rep. Ler

14:14:58 Presiding Officer Kassmier

14:15:34 Sen. Noland

RECESS

14:15:54 Reconvened at 2:30 p.m.

HOUSING STUDY TOPIC: HOUSE BILL 819 MONITORING

Overview of Topic & Introduction of Presenters

14:30:57 Erin Sullivan

[EXHIBIT 23](#)

[EXHIBIT 24](#)

Community Reinvestment Organization Program Update

14:32:54 Mark Blasdel, Director, Governor's Office of Economic Development

[EXHIBIT 25](#)

State Trust Lands Update

14:41:03 Shawn Thomas, Division Administrator/State Forester, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

14:44:49 Ryan Weiss, Deputy Trust Lands Administrator, DNRC

Public Comment

14:54:51 None

RECESS

14:55:02 Reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

MARIJUANA STUDY TOPIC: SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA TASK FORCE UPDATE

15:05:57 Kristan Barbour, Division Administrator, Cannabis Control Division
15:06:28 Kathy Wiegand-Palmer, Laboratory Program Manager, Cannabis Control Division

Public Comment

15:10:41 Kate Cholewa, Montana Cannabis Industry Association
15:11:52 Pepper Peterson, Montana Cannabis Guild
15:15:47 Josh Gosney, Infinity Wellness Dispensary
15:18:27 Mariah Bond, Soultionix LLC

Committee Questions/ Discussion

15:19:56 Sen. Noland directed a question to Kristian Barbour.
15:22:09 Sen. Noland
15:23:26 Kristan Barbour
15:24:13 Sen. Noland
15:24:26 Rep. Marshall
15:26:37 Rep. Marshall

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

Review of Administrative Rule Memo

15:28:54 Jameson Walker, Attorney, LSD
[EXHIBIT 26](#)
[EXHIBIT 27](#)

Public Comment

15:37:38 Quinlan O'Connor, Chief Legal, DLI
[EXHIBIT 28](#)
15:38:20 Webb Brown, Montana Dental Association
15:42:41 Brad Longcake, Montana Dental Hygienist's association
15:45:31 Rep. Jane Gillette, HD 64
15:48:25 Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, DLI

Committee Questions/ Discussion

15:51:41 Jameson Walker
15:51:53 Sen. Fitzpatrick directed a question to Sarah Swanson and Quinlan O'Connor.
15:55:33 Sen. Fitzpatrick
15:57:16 Sen. Fitzpatrick
15:59:53 Sen. Fitzpatrick
16:03:36 Sen. Bogner directed a question to Webb Brown.
16:05:12 Rep. Nicol
16:06:25 Quinlan O'Connor
16:07:45 Rep. Nicol directed a question to Quinlan O'Connor.
16:11:50 Rep. Nicol

16:12:11 Sarah Swanson
16:12:53 Sen. Noland directed a question to Quinlan O'Connor.
16:14:46 Sen. Noland

Motion

16:17:33 Rep. Nicol made a motion to informally object to MAR notice number: 24-138-84.

Discussion on the Motion

16:17:50 Jameson Walker
16:18:24 Sen. Fitzpatrick
16:18:45 Jameson Walker

Vote:

16:20:43 Carried 7 - 3 by roll call vote with Rep. Karlen, Rep. Lynch, Sen. Morigeau, voting no.
Rep. Lynch, Sen. Morigeau, By Proxy ([attachment 3](#))

Cannabis Control Division Rule Updates

16:22:07 Jameson Walker
[EXHIBIT 29](#)

Committee Questions/ Discussion

16:22:58 Courtney Cosgrove, Attorney, Department of Revenue (DOR)
16:24:24 Jameson Walker

Public Comment

16:24:42 Kate Cholewa
16:29:02 Jen Hensley, Fidelity Diagnostics
16:30:37 Pepper Petersen
16:39:50 Presiding Officer Kassmier left the meeting. Sen. Fitzpatrick was promoted to Presiding Officer.
16:39:54 Kristan Barbour
16:40:00 Sen. Bogner left the meeting.
16:42:08 Evan Kajander, Apogee Gardens
16:44:19 Mariah Bond, Euphoria Wellness & Soutlonix LLC
16:44:59 Antonette Lininger, Sacred Sun Farms
16:46:14 Zach Block, Montana Canna, Kalispell
16:48:14 Joanna Barney, Sacred Sun Farms

Committee Questions/ Discussion

16:51:03 Rep. Karlen
16:51:44 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
16:52:02 Jameson Walker
16:53:12 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick

Review of Administrative Rule Memo

16:56:25 Jameson Walker

Public Comment

16:57:31 None

PUBLIC COMMENT on any item in EAIC's subject matter jurisdiction

16:58:00 Rep. Gillette

Committee Questions/ Discussion

16:59:55 Rep. Karlen

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION**Directions to Staff for Agenda Items for the Next Meeting**

17:00:26 Erin Sullivan

Committee Questions/ Discussion

17:01:31 Rep. Ler
17:01:53 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:02:10 Rep. Marshall
17:02:32 Sen. Noland
17:03:08 Erin Sullivan
17:06:20 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:07:18 Rep. Ler
17:08:03 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:08:39 Rep. Nicol
17:09:25 Erin Sullivan
17:09:50 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:10:29 Rep. Karlen
17:12:54 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:13:05 Rep. Ler
17:13:37 Rep. Karlen
17:14:28 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:16:07 Rep. Nicol
17:17:36 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick
17:18:04 Erin Sullivan

ADJOURNMENT

17:20:55 Presiding Officer Fitzpatrick adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.