

STUDY PLAN FOR HJ 23: INTERIM STUDY OF DISASTER AND EMERGENCY SERVICE RECOVERY RESPONSE

STATE ADMINISTRATION AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE
PREPARED BY REBECCA C. POWER - JANUARY 2024

BACKGROUND

During the September 2023 State Administration and Veterans' Affairs (SAVA) Interim Committee meeting, members voted to allocate 0.25 FTE to member topics in the committee workplan. At the November 2023 meeting, committee members voted to take up the HJ 23 study of disaster and emergency service recovery response in Montana. The HJ 23 study was introduced during the 2023 Legislative Session and died in standing committee on the last day.

During the January 2024 SAVA meeting, a subcommittee was formed to complete the study with the understanding that the subcommittee would provide updates to the full committee during each meeting and that any legislation would be reviewed and approved by the full committee. Senator McKamey, Senator Mandeville, Representative Dooling, Representative Fitzgerald, and Representative Kortum were appointed to the subcommittee and Representative Fitzgerald was selected as the Chair.

TASKS LISTED IN HJ 23 STUDY RESOLUTION

The following tasks are included in the HJ 23 study resolution:

- Review post-emergency disaster recovery and response efforts and timelines in the state, including:
 - responses to natural disasters, such as forest fires, floods, and severe storms; and
 - responses to other disasters, such as train derailments, major car crashes, and contamination incidents;
- Review the role and past actions of local, county, tribal, state, and federal entities in the response and recovery process;
- Review the use of local, state, and federal funds in short-term and long-term disaster recovery and response efforts;
- Develop recommendations for:
 - improvements to disaster recovery and response processes and timelines to better support communities, counties, and agriculture;
 - improvements to communication, collaboration, and division of labor between local, county, tribal, state, and federal entities during disaster recovery and response efforts; and
 - improvements to the permitting, approval, and capital deployment processes to increase the speed and effectiveness of recovery efforts; and
- Determine if legislative changes are needed to ensure that Montana communities are receiving the best support in the wake of a disaster.

- Conduct the study including representatives from interested parties, including but not limited to:
 - the Montana Association of Counties,
 - the Montana League of Cities and Towns,
 - the Montana Division of Disaster and Emergency Services,
 - representatives from tribal governments across the state, and
 - representatives from conservation districts.

STUDY TIMELINE

MEETING	PRESENTATIONS, ACTION ITEMS, & DELIVERABLES
January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and Approve Draft Study Plan
February 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcommittee Zoom Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listening Sessions with Stakeholders
March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Full SAVA Committee
April 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcommittee Zoom Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Additional Listening Session (<i>if needed</i>) ○ Begin to Draft Legislation Ideas & HJ 23 Final Report
May 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Full SAVA Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Draft HJ 23-Related Committee Legislation ○ Review Draft HJ 23 Final Report
June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subcommittee Zoom Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Revise Draft Legislation & Final Report based on Committee Feedback
July 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report to Full SAVA Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finalize HJ 23-Related Committee Legislation ○ Finalize Draft HJ 23 Final Report

DELIVERABLES

At the end of the 2023-2024 interim, the following documents will be prepared in addition to any staff papers requested throughout the course of the study:

- HJ 23 Final Report
- Committee Legislation