



WATER POLICY INTERIM COMMITTEE

68th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Willis Curdy
Bruce Gillespie
Walt Sales
Jacelyn Sterling
Jeffrey Welborn

HOUSE MEMBERS

Bob Carter
Jill Cohenour
Marty Malone
Russel Miner
Bob Phalen
Kenneth Walsh

COMMITTEE STAFF

Jason Mohr - Research Analyst
Alexis Sandru - Attorney
Jacelyn Sterling - Secretary

MINUTES LOG

January 17, 2024

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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. Kenneth Walsh, Chair (R)
Rep. Jill Cohenour, Vice Chair (D)
Sen. Willis Curdy (D)
Sen. Bruce Gillespie (R)
Rep. Marty Malone (R)
Rep. Russel Miner (R)
Rep. Bob Phalen (R)
Sen. Walt Sales (R)
Sen. Jeffrey Welborn (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Bob Carter (D)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Jason Mohr, Research Analyst
Alexis Sandru, Attorney
Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

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

COMMITTEE ACTION

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

08:07:14 Presiding Officer, Kenneth Walsh called the meeting to order at 8:07 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

UPDATE FROM SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RIGHTS INFORMATION SYSTEM

08:08:14 Jason Mohr
[EXHIBIT1](#)

08:15:12 Presiding Officer Walsh

08:16:40 Anna Pakenham Stevenson, Administrator, Water Resource Division, DNRC

08:26:38 Sarah Calkins, Administrator, Montana Water Court
[EXHIBIT2](#)

Public Comment

08:28:51 Krista Lee Evans, Blake Creek Project Management
[EXHIBIT3](#)

08:38:10 Julie Merritt, Water Resource Specialist, WGM Inc.

Committee Questions, Discussion

08:43:27 Rep. Phalen

08:45:42 Krista Lee Evans

08:46:24 Sen. Gillespie

08:47:25 Krista Lee Evans

08:48:09 Sen. Sales

08:55:02 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

08:57:44 Vice Presiding Officer Cohenour

08:59:23 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

09:00:54 Sen. Welborn

09:02:47 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

09:03:50 Sen. Curdy

09:06:00 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

UPDATE ON COMPREHENSIVE WATER REVIEW

09:09:07 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

Public Comment

09:27:55 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited

09:33:31 Raylee Honeycutt, Montana Stock Growers Association

09:39:35 Krista Lee Evans, Association of Gallatin Agricultural Irrigators (AGAI)

Committee Questions, Discussion

09:45:55 Sen. Gillespie
09:49:49 Krista Lee Evans, AGAI
09:52:05 Sen. Curdy
09:52:46 Sen. Sales

UPDATE ON HB114 IMPLEMENTATION

09:55:58 Jason Mohr
09:56:10 Nate Ward, Water Rights Bureau Chief, DNRC

Public Comment

10:06:43 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited
10:08:02 Julie Merritt, Water Resource Specialist, WGM Inc.

Committee Questions, Discussion

10:09:25 Presiding Officer Walsh

WATER RIGHTS ADJUDICATION UPDATE

10:10:36 Nate Ward, Water Rights Bureau Chief, DNRC
10:18:58 Russ McElyea, Chief Water Judge, Montana Water Court

Public Comment

None

Committee Questions, Discussion

10:32:27 Sen. Sales
10:33:46 Sarah Calkins, Administrator, Montana Water Court
10:36:51 Presiding Officer Walsh
10:40:50 Trevor Watson, Deputy Administrator, Water Resource Division, DNRC
10:41:00 Presiding Officer Walsh
10:42:25 Sarah Calkins
10:42:49 Sen. Sales
10:43:02 Anna Pakenham Stevenson, DNRC
10:45:33 Sen. Sales
10:46:48 Presiding Officer Walsh

FINAL DROUGHT PLAN: DECISIONS FOR LEGISLATORS

10:47:32 Jason Mohr
10:48:48 Valerie Kurth, Planning Section Supervisor, DNRC
[EXHIBIT4](#)
10:49:35 Rep. Phalen left the meeting.

Public Comment

None

Committee Questions, Discussion

11:04:12 Sen. Curdy
11:08:35 Valerie Kurth, DNRC
11:09:10 Vice Presiding Officer Cohenour
11:10:12 Valerie Kurth
11:10:34 Anna Pakenham Stevenson
11:13:41 Sen. Curdy
11:15:57 Anna Pakenham Stevenson
11:17:19 Sen. Sales
11:19:29 Anna Pakenham Stevenson
11:22:35 Rep. Malone
11:23:08 Anna Pakenham Stevenson

REPORT ON USFS WATER RESERVATIONS

11:24:25 Jason Mohr
11:25:10 Attila Foltagy, Hydrologist Supervisor, Compact Implementation Program,
DNRC
[EXHIBIT5](#)

Public Comment

None

Committee Questions, Discussion

11:29:35 Rep. Cohenour
11:30:33 Sen. Sales

Public Comment

None

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

11:33:21 Jason Mohr
11:34:14 Presiding Officer Walsh
11:35:32 Vice Presiding Officer Cohenour
11:38:27 Rep. Malone
11:40:09 Vice Presiding Officer Cohenour
11:42:06 Sen. Sales
11:42:45 Jason Mohr
11:43:11 Vice Presiding Officer Cohenour
11:43:47 Sen. Sales
11:44:21 Sen. Curdy
11:46:13 Presiding Officer Walsh

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 11:46:52

