



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

November 28, 2023

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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.

Access to an electronic copy of these minutes and the audio or video recording is provided from the Legislative Branch home page at <https://leg.mt.gov>. From the home page, select the "Committees" drop down menu at the top, then select Administrative or Interim, and the appropriate committee. The written minutes log can be located by expanding the accordion menu for the date of the meeting. Links to the audio/video files can be located by selecting the Video/Audio button on the same page, then the "past/current recordings" button. From there, use the calendar to select the date of the meeting you wish to view/listen to. The written Minutes Log, along with links to the audio and video recordings, is listed by meeting date on the interim committee's web page. Each of the Exhibits is linked and can be viewed by clicking on the Exhibit of interest. All Exhibits are public information and may be printed. Please contact the Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for more information.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Kenneth Walsh, Chair (R)
Rep. Jill Cohenour, Vice Chair (D)
Rep. Bob Carter (D)
Sen. Walt Sales (R)
Sen. Jeffrey Welborn (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

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

08:37:14 Presiding Officer, Kenneth Walsh called the meeting to order at 8:37 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW

08:38:51 Alexis Sandru

08:40:13 Rep. Carter joined the meeting via zoom.

08:42:46 Presiding Officer Walsh

08:43:42 Trevor Watson, Deputy Administrator, Water Resources Division, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)

[EXHIBIT1](#)

Committee Questions, Discussion

09:01:53 Rep. Cohenour

09:05:48 Anna Pakenham Stevenson, DNRC, responding to Rep. Cohenour.

09:09:32 Rep Cohenor

09:16:45 Russ McElyea, Chief Water Judge, Montana Water Court, responding to Rep. Cohenour.

09:23:42 Rep. Cohenour to Judge McElyea

09:30:02 Sen. Sales to Krista Lee Evans

09:41:41 Anna Pakenham Stevenson to Sen. Sales

09:46:37 Nate Ward, Water Rights Bureau Chief, DNRC

09:51:46 Presiding Officer Walsh to Nate Ward

09:53:07 Rep. Carter to Nate Ward

09:58:05 Nate Ward redirected to Chris Powell Chief Information Officer, DNRC

10:00:34 Rep. Carter to Trevor Watson

MONTANA WATER COURT USE OF AND CONCERNS WITH WRIS

10:03:43 Russ McElyea, Judge, Water Court

Committee Questions, Discussion

10:16:28 Rep. Cohenour to Sarah Calkins, administrator, Montana Water Court

10:22:41 Trevor Watson responding to Rep. Cohenour

10:25:25 Rep. Cohenour

10:26:20 Nate Ward

10:29:12 Sen. Sales to Sarah Calkins

10:35:34 Sen. Sales to Nate Ward

10:45:40 Sen. Sales to Judge Steve Brown, Montana Water Court

10:52:58 Rep. Cohenour to Nate Ward

11:07:44 Presiding Officer Walsh

11:07:59 Rep. Carter to Nate Ward

11:12:30 Trevor Watson

RECESS

11:13:04

RECONVENED

11:24:07

Public Comment on WRIS Use

11:24:52 Krista Lee Evans

[EXHIBIT2](#)

11:51:24 Carly Johnson, Montana Farm Bureau

11:53:08 Clayton Elliot, Montana Trout Unlimited

11:58:45 Julie Merritt, WGM Group, Missoula

12:05:07 John Bloomquist

Committee Questions, Discussion

12:15:07 Rep. Cohenour

12:17:42 Sen. Sales

12:19:18 Jason Mohr

12:21:05 Sen. Sales

12:23:00 Rep. Cohenour

12:27:33 Presiding Officer Walsh

12:31:53 Sen. Welborn

12:33:38 Rep. Cohenour

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 12:35:53