



## Interim Budget Committee- Section C 67th Montana Legislature

Room 442 Capitol Building \* P.O. Box 201711 \* Helena, MT 59620-1711 \* (406) 444-2986 \* FAX (406) 444-3036

### SENATE MEMBERS

Kenneth Bogner, Vice Chair  
Janet Ellis  
Jeff Welborn

### HOUSE MEMBERS

Jerry Schillinger, Chair  
Joe Read  
Lyn Hellegaard  
Sharon Stewart Peregoy

### COMMITTEE STAFF

Rob Miller, Fiscal Analyst  
Alice Hecht, Fiscal Analyst

March 13, 2024  
Room 42  
Helena, Montana

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### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Rep. Jerry Schillinger, Chair (R)  
Sen. Kenneth Bogner, Vice Chair (R)  
Sen. Janet Ellis (D)  
Rep. Joe Read (R)  
Rep. Lyn Hellegaard (R)

### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Sen. Jeff Welborn (R)  
Rep. Sharon Stewart Peregoy (D)

### **MEMBERS ABSENT:**

### **STAFF PRESENT:**

Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst  
Alice Hecht, Fiscal Analyst  
Grace Gibney, Secretary

### **AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))**

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

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

08:27:09 Rep. Jerry Schillinger called the meeting to order. Staff took roll.

08:28:02 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst (LFD), provided overview of the day's agenda

### **Legislative Audit Division**

08:29:54 Jeremy Verhasselt, Management and Program Analyst Supervisor Legislative Audit Division provided overview of objectives of audit division and major projects in works for committee. No audio until 08:32:35.

### **Petroleum Tank Clean-Up Fund**

- 08:35:27 Rep Jerry Schillinger acknowledged Sen John Esp who joined committee for discussion on petroleum tank clean-up discussion
- 08:36:30 John Harrington, Management and Program Analyst manager LAD, gave brief run-down of audit activities concerning petroleum tank clean-up fund
- 08:39:44 Terry Wadsworth, Executive Director of Petroleum Tank Release Compensation Board, provided audit review
- 08:53:00 Amy Steinmetz, Waste Management and Remediation Division Administrator of Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provided insight into how their agency is affected by the petroleum tank clean up
- 09:02:28 Brad Longcake, Montana Petroleum Marketers and Convenience Store Association, provided comments on how private individuals are affected
- 09:07:35 Sen Janet Ellis commented on audit of clean up, wanted to ensure all agencies are on the same page when it comes to the audit, funding, and responsibilities
- 09:33:52 Amy Steinmetz, Waste Management and Remediation Division Administrator of Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provided HB 868 reports

### **Recessed to join Interim Budget Committee, Section F**

09:35:37 Reconvened at 09:47:23 in room 472 with Section F

### **Joint Meeting with Section F Long-Range Planning**

09:51:00 Jennifer Patrick, Program Manager of the Milk River Irrigation Project Joint Board of Control, presented on project. Answered questions on locations of facilities, funding timelines, current capacity, and future issues with capacities

### **Reconvened Interim Budget Committee, Section C**

10:40:48 Reconvened at 11:04:16 in room 422

### **Section C Summary**

11:04:35 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst LFD, provided Section C summary

## **Department of Agriculture**

- 11:04:35 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.
- 11:10:41 Christy Clark, Director of the Department of Agriculture,
- 11:13:35 Sen Janet Ellis asked if funds from a previous bill for weed control had been fully expended
- 11:14:15 Ian Foley, Administrator of the Agricultural Sciences Division for Department of Agriculture, responded
- 11:14:42 Sen Janet Ellis asked about the timeline on expending ARPA funds
- 11:15:36 Zach Coccoli, Administrator of the Agricultural Development Division and Deputy Director of the Department of Agriculture, responded
- 11:16:10 Ian Foley, Administrator of the Agricultural Sciences Division for Department of Agriculture, answered questions related to seasonal employees, potato inspections, FTE

## **Lunch**

- 11:34:23 Reconvened at 13:01:21

## **Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**

- 13:01:37 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.
- 13:06:30 Amanda Kaster, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), presented on future plans and additional capacity for fire season
- 13:13:48 Michael Downey, Drought Program Coordinator at DNRC, presented on current conditions
- 13:25:33 Amanda Kaster, Director of DNRC, spoke on the relationship between different divisions and the inability to forecast fire season, the need to be vigilant, and the preparations the department can make for fire season
- 13:28:55 Meaghan Bjerke, Chief Financial Officer DNRC, presented on transitioning staff
- 13:30:46 Rep Joe Read asked if the department could break down expenses to show aircraft expenses for the bigger fires, including federal numbers to compare contract funding to state's expenditures
- 13:33:26 Sen Janet Ellis asked how much of the orphan oil and gas wells program funding had been expended, if the report can show progress from identified to closed. Additionally, asked about state versus federal fire fighter pay and about long-term vacancies
- 13:42:15 Rebecca Boslough-King, Executive Director of the Montana Association of Conservation Districts, presented on where the conservation districts are in regard to funding
- 13:44:36 Mark Bostrum, Administrator of Conservation Resource Development Division DNRC, presented on trust funding

### **Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks**

13:48:55 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.

13:53:26 Dustin Temple, Director of Fish Wildlife and Parks, introduced Melissa Watson as the new Chief of Staff. Answered questions on organizational structure, comp time versus overtime and how that gets determined, why hours used exceeds hours allocated, and why fisheries researchers are treated differently that wildlife researchers.

### **Break**

14:13:20 Reconvened at 14:34:23

### **Department of Environmental Quality**

14:35:11 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.

14:38:48 James Fehr, Deputy Director DEQ, spoke on vacancies within department.

14:46:59 Sen Janet Ellis requested status update on Zortman and Landusky cleanup

14:47:47 Chris Dorrington, Director DEQ, responded.

14:49:17 Sen Janet Ellis asked if the federal grants from energy department for reliability and resiliency of energy grids go to utilities or to DEQ

14:51:12 Rep Jerry Schillinger commented on the Supreme Court Decision on Black Butte Copper Mine. Provided opportunity for DEQ to comment

14:52:02 Chris Dorrington, Director DEQ, provided comment

### **Department of Livestock**

02:48:26 Rob Miller, Senior Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.

14:58:58 Mike Honeycutt, Executive Officer of Department of Livestock, provided comment on quarterly financial report. Answered questions on diagnostic lab timeline and status.

### **Department of Transportation**

- 02:48:26 Alice Hecht, Fiscal Analyst, (LFD) presented Quarterly Financial Report.
- 15:41:06 Malcolm 'Mack' Long, Director of Department of Transportation, provided comments on quarterly financial report.
- 15:46:14 Sen Janet Ellis asked about federal transportation bill and long-term vacancies
- 15:52:00 Nicole Pallister, Chief Financial Officer Department of Transportation, responded.
- 15:52:52 Alice Hecht, Fiscal Analyst LFD, introduced new organizational structure with Malcolm Long's retirement.

### **Public Comment**

- 15:53:51 No public comment. Committee congratulated Malcom Long on retirement.

### **Adjournment**

- 16:03:06 Rep. Jerry Schillinger adjourned the meeting.