



ECONOMIC AFFAIRS INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Kenneth Bogner
Ellie Boldman
Josh Kassmier
Mark Noland

HOUSE MEMBERS

Ed Buttrey
Brian Close
Jamie Isaly
Brandon Ler
Nelly Nicol
Peter Strand
Morgan Thiel

COMMITTEE STAFF

Maddelyn Pennington - Secretary
Jameson Walker – Legal Staff
Matthew Weaver – Lead Staff

MINUTES LOG

May 19, 2026
Room 317
Helena, Montana

Minutes logs provide an annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of a meeting and the time at which a topic is presented or discussed, a motion made, or a vote taken. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion in the video. The minutes log is only a guide to the video of the meeting. The official record of the meeting is the video. Minutes logs can be accessed at <https://committees.legmt.gov> and videos can be accessed at <https://media.legmt.gov>.

For more information, please contact:

The Legislative Services Division at 406-444-3064 for policy committees;
The Legislative Fiscal Division at 406-444-2986 for fiscal committees; or
The Legislative Audit Division at 406-444-3122 for the Legislative Audit Committee.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Rep. Brandon Ler, Presiding Officer (R)
Sen. Ellie Boldman, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R)
Rep. Brian Close (D)
Rep. Jamie Isaly (D)
Sen. Josh Kassmier (R)
Rep. Nelly Nicol (R)
Sen. Mark Noland (R)
Rep. Peter Strand (D)
Rep. Morgan Thiel (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Rep. Ed Buttrey (R)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary
Jameson Walker, Legal Staff
Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

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

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

09:05:18 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

OVERVIEW

09:06:05 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

09:06:25 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

09:07:16 **Recessed**

10:31:18 **Reconvened**

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW

10:31:35 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:34:45 Sen. Mark Noland

10:35:12 Jameson Walker

Public Comment

10:36:02 Quinlan O'Connor, Chief Legal Officer, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:36:27 None

MEMBER TOPIC: ROBOTICS, AI, AND MONTANA WORKFORCE

10:36:46 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

10:37:09 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

10:37:28 Adam Meier, Cicero Institute

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:49:07 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

MEMBER TOPIC: ROBOTICS, AI, AND MONTANA WORKFORCE - Continued

10:49:40 Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)

Public Comment

11:00:02 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:00:24 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman
11:00:44 Sen. Mark Noland
11:02:28 Adam Meier, Cicero Institute
11:11:24 Rep. Brian Close
11:11:45 Adam Meier, Cicero Institute
11:14:49 Rep. Jamie Isaly
11:15:09 Adam Meier, Cicero Institute
11:17:51 Sen. Mark Noland
11:18:33 Adam Meier, Cicero Institute
11:19:59 Sarah Swanson, DLI

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: DIVISION OF BANKING AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

11:23:10 Melanie Hall, Commissioner, Department of Administration (DOA)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

Public Comment

11:43:23 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:43:37 Rep. Brian Close
11:44:53 Melanie Hall, DOA
11:45:05 Sen. Mark Noland
11:47:33 Melanie Hall, DOA
11:48:19 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
11:48:23 Melanie Hall, DOA
11:49:37 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
11:50:00 Sen. Mark Noland
11:50:04 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

11:50:14 **Recessed**

13:05:36 **Reconvened**

AGENCY OVERSIGHT: OFFICE OF STATE AUDITOR AND INSURANCE COMMISSIONER

Department Update

13:06:19 James Brown, State Auditor, Commissioner of Securities & Insurance (CSI)

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:19:22 Rep. Brian Close
13:19:33 James Brown, CSI

13:19:44 Rep. Jamie Isaly
13:20:07 James Brown, CSI

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: OFFICE OF STATE AUDITOR AND INSURANCE COMMISSIONER -
Continued**

Prescription Drug Stakeholder Meetings

13:22:11 James Brown, CSI
13:22:46 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, CSI

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:24:47 None

**AGENCY OVERSIGHT: OFFICE OF STATE AUDITOR AND INSURANCE COMMISSIONER -
Continued**

Update: House Joint Resolution 61 Data Call

13:25:12 Trevor Graff, CSI

Public Comment

13:28:15 E.J. Redding, Montana Family Pharmacists

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:29:01 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
13:29:28 Trevor Graff, CSI
13:30:29 Rep. Jamie Isaly
13:30:48 Trevor Graff, CSI
13:31:25 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler
13:32:20 Rep. Nelly Nicol
13:33:15 Trevor Graff, CSI
13:34:17 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

**COMMITTEE DRAFT LEGISLATION REVIEW: GAMBLING OVERSIGHT PROVISIONAL
DRAFT**

13:35:05 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

13:35:18 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, LSD

Public Comment

13:40:53 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:41:17 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

Motion

13:42:14 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler moved to approve Provisional Draft 0048 as a committee bill.

Vote

13:42:35 Carried unanimously by voice vote.
Rep. Ed Buttrey voted 'aye' by proxy.

13:43:19 **Recessed**

14:04:35 **Reconvened**

COMMITTEE DRAFT LEGISLATION REVIEW: KRATOM PROVISIONAL DRAFT 1.1

14:05:36 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:05:48 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

Public Comment

14:14:30 Jay Yeager

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

14:20:19 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

14:20:27 John Forte, City County Health Officer, Yellowstone County & Riverstone Health

14:24:32 Mac Haddow, American Kratom Association

14:31:57 Amanda Cahill, Confluence Health Alliance

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

14:36:12 Dr. Madeline Turner, Helena

14:39:19 E.J. Redding, Montana Kava and Kratom Association

14:43:17 Kelli McCann

14:47:26 Ari Greenberg, Billings

14:51:43 Dan Gibbs

14:57:19 Susan Cave

15:02:30 Wendy Chamberlain, Kratom Danger Awareness

15:06:14 Susan Eppard

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:09:30 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:10:21 **Recessed**

15:25:25 **Reconvened**

**COMMITTEE DRAFT LEGISLATION REVIEW: KRATOM PROVISIONAL DRAFT 1.1 -
Continued**

15:25:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Motion

15:26:01 Sen. Mark Noland moved for committee staff to draft a total ban bill regarding kratom.

Discussion on the Motion

15:27:27 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:27:43 Rep. Brian Close

15:28:45 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:29:53 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Vote

15:30:21 Carried 9 – 2 by roll call vote with Presiding Officer Rep. Brandon Ler voting ‘no’ and Sen. Kenneth Bogner voting ‘no’ by proxy.

Motion

15:31:19 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler moved for committee staff to draft a bill resembling House Bill 407 from the 2025 session.

Discussion on the Motion

15:32:42 Rep. Jamie Isaly

15:32:48 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:33:24 Sen. Josh Kassmier

15:34:04 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:34:15 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:36:05 Rep. Nelly Nicol

15:37:13 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

Vote

15:37:51 Carried 8 – 3 by roll call vote with Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman, Rep. Jamie Isaly, and Rep. Peter Strand voting ‘no’.

Discussion on the Vote

15:38:44 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

**PUBLIC COMMENT* ON ANY TOPIC UNDER THE COMMITTEE’S JURISDICTION BUT NOT
ON THIS AGENDA**

15:39:25 None

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP

Overview

15:39:53 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued
Expectations for Agency Legislation

15:40:26 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued
Next Meeting Date

15:42:01 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:42:18 Rep. Brian Close

15:43:25 Matthew Weaver

[EXHIBIT 12](#)

15:44:35 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:45:36 Rep. Peter Strand

15:45:46 Sen. Mark Noland

15:46:22 Sen. Josh Kassmier

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued
Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA) Memorandum

15:47:15 Rep. Brian Close

[EXHIBIT 13](#)

15:48:13 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:48:27 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:48:35 Matthew Weaver, LSD

15:50:38 Sen. Mark Noland

Motion

15:52:41 Rep. Brian Close moved for committee staff to draft a bill to remove exemptions regarding property managers.

Discussion on the Motion

15:52:32 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:52:35 Rep. Brian Close

15:52:49 Matthew Weaver, LSD

15:53:38 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:54:26 Sen. Josh Kassmier

15:56:45 Rep. Jamie Isaly

15:57:23 Rep. Brian Close withdrew his motion.

WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP - Continued
Future Meeting

15:57:54 Matthew Weaver, LSD

15:58:51 Sen. Mark Noland

15:59:00 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler

15:59:14 Rep. Jamie Isaly

15:59:45 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:00:29