



## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL 69th Montana Legislature

### SENATE MEMBERS

Willis Curdy  
John Esp  
Pat Flowers  
Wylie Galt  
Forrest Mandeville  
Tony Tezak

### HOUSE MEMBERS

Paul Fielder  
Tom France  
Steve Gist  
Jedediah Hinkle  
Shannon Maness  
Joshua Seckinger

### PUBLIC MEMBERS

Christian Bray  
Jim Keane  
Mike Mershon  
Jon Metropoulos  
Brian Yablonski

### COMMITTEE STAFF

Joseph Carroll – Legal Staff  
Jason Mohr – Legislative  
Environmental Analyst  
Casey Pallister – Research  
Analyst  
Jacelyn Sterling - Secretary

# MINUTES LOG

March 25, 2026  
Room 317 & Zoom  
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. Paul Fielder, Presiding Officer (R)  
Sen. Willis Curdy, Vice Presiding Officer (D)  
Christian Bray, Public Member  
Sen. John Esp (R)  
Sen. Pat Flowers (D)  
Rep. Tom France (D)  
Rep. Jedediah Hinkle (R)  
Jim Keane, Public Member  
Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R)  
Rep. Shannon Maness (R)  
Mike Mershon, Public Member  
Jon Metropoulos, Public Member  
Rep. Joshua Seckinger (D)  
Sen. Tony Tezak (R)  
Brian Yablonski, Public Member

### MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Sen. Wylie Galt (R)  
Rep. Steve Gist (R)

### MEMBERS ABSENT:

### STAFF PRESENT:

Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff  
Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst

**MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH MANAGEMENT:** JERRY HOWE, LEGISLATIVE SERVICES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR • ANGUS MACIVER, LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR • AMY CARLSON, LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ANALYST • TODD EVERTS, LEGAL SERVICES DIRECTOR • DALE GOW, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER • RACHEL WEISS, RESEARCH DIRECTOR • ANGIE CARTER, FINANCIAL OFFICE DIRECTOR • KELLY DASILVA HR DIRECTOR

Casey Pallister, Research Analyst  
Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

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

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

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

08:30:49 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**STATE OF MONTANA'S RIVERS**

08:34:37 Casey Pallister, Lead Staff of River Panels, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

**Panel on Health of Montana Fisheries**

08:37:52 Mike Duncan, Region 3 Fisheries Manager, Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

08:48:08 Guy Alsentzer, Executive Director, Upper Missouri Waterkeeper

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

09:01:23 Nathan Cook, Environmental Scientist, Natural Resources Damage Program, Montana Department of Justice (DOJ)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

**Public Comment**

09:12:50 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited

09:18:09 Grason Gee, Rainmaker Technology

09:20:52 Raelynn Brandl, Montana Association of Conservation Districts

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

09:22:38 Sen. John Esp

09:22:44 Guy Alsentzer, Upper Missouri Waterkeeper

09:22:48 Sen. John Esp

09:23:17 Mike Duncan, FWP

09:23:53 Sen. Tony Tezak

09:27:07 Mike Duncan, FWP

09:28:55 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle

09:29:54 Grason Gee, Rainmaker Technology

09:31:07 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle

09:31:42 Grason Gee, Rainmaker Technology

09:32:19 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

09:33:09 Brian Yablonski

09:33:40 Mike Duncan, FWP

09:34:30 Jim Keane  
09:36:11 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:36:54 Jim Keane  
09:38:24 Nathan Cook, DOJ  
09:39:15 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:39:47 Rep. Shannon Maness  
09:41:06 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:41:39 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
09:42:18 Nathan Cook, DOJ  
09:43:53 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:44:05 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
09:45:18 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:46:13 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:46:25 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:46:46 Sen. Pat Flowers  
09:47:30 Mike Duncan, FWP  
09:47:45 Guy Alsentzer, Upper, Missouri Waterkeeper

#### **Panel on River Recreation**

09:50:35 Steve Luebeck, Big Hole Watershed Committee  
09:56:47 Randy Arnold, Director, Department of Lands, Culture, and Recreation, Missoula Co.  
10:02:53 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:03:15 Randy Arnold, Missoula Co.  
10:06:48 Charlie Sperry, Licensed Montana Fishing Outfitter  
[EXHIBIT 4](#)  
10:15:32 Mike Bias, Executive Director, Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM)  
[EXHIBIT 5](#)

#### **Public Comment**

10:23:55 Scott Vollmer, President Elect, Montana Outfitters & Guides Association

#### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

10:26:44 Sen. Tony Tezak  
10:27:21 Mike Bias, FOAM  
10:28:26 Jim Keane  
10:28:59 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
10:29:21 Mike Bias, FOAM  
10:30:27 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
10:32:11 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

10:32:18 Jon Metropoulos  
10:34:42 Mike Bias, FOAM  
10:34:57 Sen. John Esp  
10:36:26 Mike Bias, FOAM  
10:36:40 Sen. John Esp  
10:36:57 Brian Yablonski  
10:37:36 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:38:22 Rep. Tom France  
10:38:56 Mike Bias, FOAM  
10:39:54 Rep. Tom France  
10:40:50 Charlie Sperry  
10:43:01 Rep. Joshua Seckinger

10:43:57 **Recessed**

10:48:09 **Reconvened**

#### **STATE OF MONTANA'S RIVERS - Continued**

##### **Panel on Nutrients and Algae**

10:49:32 Lindsey Krywaruchka, Division Administrator, Water Quality Division Department of Environmental Quality Division (DEQ)

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

10:54:15 Sarah Zuzulock, Zuzulock Environmental Services

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

11:02:24 Sam Carlson, Staff Scientist, Clark Fork Coalition

11:08:54 Amanda McInnis, Engineer, Montana League of Cities and Towns (MT League)

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

##### **Public Comment**

11:14:01 Clayton Elliott, Montana Trout Unlimited

11:16:44 Matt Vincent, Executive Director, Montana Mining Association

11:17:41 Guy Alsenzter, Upper Missouri Waterkeeper

11:20:18 Robert Ray, Helena

##### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

11:22:00 Rep. Shannon Maness

11:22:20 Lindsey Krywaruchka, DEQ

11:22:34 Amanda McInnis, MT League

11:23:10 Rep. Tom France

11:27:05 Amanda McInnis, MT League

11:27:26 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

11:30:21 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
11:30:49 Sen. John Esp  
11:31:43 Lindsey Krywaruchka, DEQ

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

11:32:30 Kristy Clark, Director, Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP)  
[EXHIBIT 10](#)

#### **Public Comment**

11:51:08 Mark Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies  
11:53:25 James Bell  
11:54:09 Rep. Tom France  
11:54:27 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
11:54:43 Jennifer Hensley, Ability Montana  
[EXHIBIT 11](#)

#### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

11:59:43 Sen. Tony Tezak  
12:01:07 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:01:32 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
12:02:37 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
12:03:08 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:04:32 Sen. Pat Flowers  
12:05:02 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:06:37 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
12:06:41 Sen. Pat Flowers  
12:08:31 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
12:11:25 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:12:06 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
12:12:46 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
12:13:28 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
12:16:12 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:17:35 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
12:17:59 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:18:09 Rep. Tom France  
12:19:36 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP  
12:20:24 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
12:20:30 Brian Yablonski  
12:21:44 Dir. Kristy Clark, FWP

12:23:09     **Recessed**  
13:04:41     **Reconvened**

**HOUSE BILL 70 (STUDY OF STATE FIRE SUPPRESSION)**  
**Work Group Updates**

13:05:05     Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 12](#)

13:08:00     Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

13:08:12     Jason Mohr, LSD

13:08:17     Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

13:10:07     Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

13:10:21     Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

13:12:30     Jason Mohr, LSD

13:12:54     Sen. Pat Flowers

13:13:10     Jason Mohr, LSD

13:13:16     Rep. Shannon Maness

13:14:16     Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

13:14:28     Rep. Shannon Maness

13:14:53     Jason Mohr, LSD

13:15:07     Rep. Joshua Seckinger

13:15:30     Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**REORGANIZATION OF FEDERAL WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING AGENCIES / FEDERAL PERSPECTIVE ON CHANGES SINCE 2009 LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

13:16:22     Troy Heithecker, Regional Forester, Rocky Mountain Region, United States. Forest Service (USFS)

13:24:18     Brad Shoemaker, Fire Chief, North Rockies Geographic Area, United States Wildland Fire Service (USWFS)

13:32:01     Aaron Thompson, Fuels and Post-Fire Specialist, USWFS

**Public Comment**

13:32:55     None

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

13:33:16     Rep. Shannon Maness

13:34:27     Troy Heithecker, USFS

13:34:48     Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

13:36:51     Brad Shoemaker, USWFS

13:37:01     Aaron Thompson, USWFS

13:41:25     Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

13:42:50 Aaron Thompson, USWFS  
13:45:00 Brad Shoemaker, USWFS  
13:49:19 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
13:51:48 Troy Heithecker, USFS  
13:52:14 Sen. Pat Flowers  
13:52:45 Troy Heithecker, USFS  
13:54:03 Sen. Pat Flowers  
13:54:58 Brad Shoemaker, USWFS  
13:58:22 Rep. Tom France  
13:59:44 Troy Heithecker, USFS  
14:00:18 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
14:00:59 Brad Shoemaker, USWFS  
14:01:31 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
14:02:01 Brian Yablonski  
14:02:49 Troy Heithecker, USFS

14:04:35 **Recessed**

14:13:28 **Reconvened**

#### **HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 62 (STUDY OF WILDFIRE PREVENTION / RESILIENCE)**

14:14:16 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 13](#)

#### **PANEL ON INSURANCE COSTS AND WILDLAND FIRE**

14:15:55 Lyn Elliot, Vice Present, State Government Relations, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)

[EXHIBIT 14](#)

14:25:33 Jason Mohr, LSD

14:25:52 Brandon Vick, Regional Vice President, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)

[EXHIBIT 15](#)

14:39:14 Michael DeLong, Research and Advocacy Association, Consumer Federation of America

[EXHIBIT 16](#)

14:52:32 Bob Biskupiak, Regional Vice President, NAMIC

14:57:33 Trevor Graff, Director of Government Relations, Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance, Montana State Auditor (SAO)

#### **Public Comment**

15:07:03 None

#### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

15:07:24 Brian Yablonski  
15:09:25 Lyn Elliot, APCIA  
[EXHIBIT 17](#)  
15:12:41 Karen Collins, APCIA  
15:15:20 Rep. Tom France  
15:16:29 Trevor Graff, SAO  
15:17:21 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
15:18:12 Trevor Graff, SAO  
15:18:57 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
15:21:31 Lyn Elliot, APCIA  
15:22:46 Karen Collins, APCIA  
15:27:15 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
15:27:36 Trevor Graff, SAO  
15:28:10 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
15:28:53 Karen Collins, APCIA  
15:30:50 Sen. Pat Flowers  
15:31:58 Trevor Graff, SAO  
15:32:52 Karen Collins, APCIA  
15:36:31 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
15:38:32 Brandon Vick, NAMIC  
15:40:08 Lyn Elliot, APCIA  
15:40:54 Karen Collins, APCIA  
15:42:52 Sen. John Esp

#### **PANEL ON WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI) BUILDING CODES**

15:43:50 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 18](#)  
15:45:31 Wyatt Frampton, Deputy Forest Administrator, Forestry and Trust Lands Division of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)  
15:53:27 Eric Copeland, Building and Commercial Measurements Bureau Chief, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI)  
15:57:06 Ben Abbey, Chief Building Official, City of Bozeman

#### **Public Comment**

16:01:04 Kris Cooper, Colorado Springs Fire Department  
16:05:16 Dash Rodman, Gnarled Pine Forestry  
16:08:22 Sen. Wylie Galt joined the meeting via zoom.  
16:09:15 Brett Lacey, Colorado WUI Code Board

#### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

16:12:52 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
16:13:14 Ben Abbey, City of Bozeman  
16:14:59 Sen. John Esp  
16:15:28 Eric Copeland, DLI  
16:17:46 Mike Mershon  
16:18:26 Eric Copeland, DLI

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ISSUE WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE EQC**

16:19:58 Mark Cooke, Wolves of the Rockies  
16:23:11 James Bell, Bozeman

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

16:25:27 Rep. Tom France  
16:26:23 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ISSUE WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE EQC**

**– Continued**

16:27:04 Erica Fischer, Oregon State University

**ADMINISTRATIVE WORK SESSION**

16:32:00 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
16:32:59 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:33:24 Jason Mohr, LSD  
16:33:39 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
16:34:05 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:34:34 Jason Mohr, LSD  
16:35:26 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:36:19 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
16:36:30 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:36:58 Jim Keane  
16:37:07 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:38:57 Jason Mohr, LSD  
16:39:20 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:40:21 Sen. John Esp  
16:40:57 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:41:22 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
16:41:40 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:42:09 Jon Metropoulos  
16:43:06 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:43:41 Sen. John Esp

16:44:13 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:44:23 Sen. John Esp  
16:44:39 Rep. Tom France  
16:45:45 Sen. Pat Flowers  
16:46:05 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:46:19 Jim Keane  
16:47:25 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:48:30 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
16:49:07 Jason Mohr, LSD  
16:49:41 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
16:50:22 Sen. John Esp  
16:51:36 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 16:52:04