



# Water Policy Interim Committee

69th Montana Legislature

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MADDELYN PENNINGTON, Secretary

May 11, 2026

Legislative Council  
1301 East 6<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Helena MT 59620

Chair Bogner and Executive Director Howe:

The Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC) often conducts at least one field trip or travel meeting during the interim. This interim, the committee had intended to travel in July of 2026. However, the committee decided against a travel meeting after learning that Legislative Council policy does not allow for remote public testimony at a travel meeting.

Travel meetings are a great opportunity for committee members to see policy decisions in action and learn more about the geography, history, economy, social dynamics, and unique circumstances across the state. Members gain a better understanding of Montana life outside of their respective districts, thus helping state legislators become more well-rounded decision makers.

The Water Policy Interim Committee is currently engaged in a study of exempt groundwater wells, a topic affecting many citizens. For this reason, the committee's work plan requires multiple opportunities for the public to provide comment throughout the interim, especially in the next few meetings as WPIC considers draft legislation. Increased public input will create a more well-developed bill for introduction to the 70<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session. The committee decided not to travel in July due to concern that not allowing remote testimony at a travel meeting will restrict important public input on this state-wide issue.

The Water Policy Interim Committee requests that the Legislative Council revisit discussions regarding the interim travel meeting policy, and reconsider allowing remote testimony at all interim meetings, regardless of whether a meeting is held at the Capitol or at a remote location. The committee recognizes that travel meetings may present challenges such as access to technological needs. However, most areas of the state now have locations with high-speed internet and video and audio recording capabilities, providing interim committees appropriate options for travel meetings with remote testimony.

Respectfully,

Sen. Wylie Galt, Chair

Rep. Jill Cohenour, Vice Chair