



## 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  
Richard Roth  
Brian Yablonski

### COMMITTEE STAFF

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

# MINUTES LOG

May 12, 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)  
Sen. John Esp (R)  
Sen. Pat Flowers (D)  
Rep. Tom France (D)  
Rep. Steve Gist (R)  
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:

Christian Bray, Public Member  
Sen. Wylie Galt (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

Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary

**AGENDA**

**VISITOR'S LIST**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

08:01:28 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder called the meeting to order at 8:01 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

**MAY MEETING PREVIEW**

08:02:50 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division

**ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW**

08:04:36 Joseph Carroll, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

**Public Comment**

08:05:26 None

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

08:05:35 None

**HOUSE BILL 70 - STUDY OF STATE FIRE SUPPRESSION**

**Draft Findings**

08:06:05 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

08:08:06 Christian Bray joined the meeting.

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

08:09:31 Rep. Steve Gist

08:12:04 Jason Mohr, LSD

08:12:37 Rep. Tom France

08:13:42 Rep. Steve Gist

08:14:15 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

08:14:32 Rep. Steve Gist

08:14:54 Jason Mohr, LSD

08:15:50 Vice Chair Willis Curdy

08:17:05 Rep. Steve Gist

08:17:17 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

08:18:01 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle

08:18:14 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
08:18:50 Jason Mohr, LSD

**HOUSE BILL 70 - STUDY OF STATE FIRE SUPPRESSION**  
**Fire tool “consumer version” (Modernization and Risk Analysis Committee) (Legislative Fiscal Division - LFD)**

08:19:01 Jason Mohr, LSD  
08:20:13 Alice Hecht, LFD  
[EXHIBIT 3](#)  
08:22:58 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
08:38:08 Sen. Pat Flowers  
08:40:27 Alice Hecht, LFD  
08:43:06 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
08:43:53 Alice Hecht, LFD  
08:45:18 Sen. John Esp  
08:46:12 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
08:47:08 Sen. Wylie Galt joined the meeting via zoom.  
08:47:51 Alice Hecht, LFD  
08:48:36 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
08:51:10 Alice Hecht, LFD  
08:51:43 Rep. Steve Gist  
08:52:01 Alice Hecht, LFD  
08:52:28 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
08:53:20 Rep. Steve Gist  
08:54:30 Jim Keane  
08:56:18 Mike Mershon  
08:57:38 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:02:05 Rep. Steve Gist  
09:02:13 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:04:35 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
09:06:15 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:14:36 Rep. Jedediah Hinkle  
09:16:06 Sen. Pat Flowers  
09:16:42 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:21:43 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:25:29 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:26:24 Jason Mohr, LSD  
09:26:55 Rep. Tom France  
09:27:52 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:27:59 Sen. John Esp

09:28:36 Rep. Steve Gist  
09:30:34 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
09:34:36 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:39:38 Sen. Pat Flowers  
09:41:46 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:42:11 Alice Hecht, LFD  
09:51:18 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
09:51:46 Jason Mohr, LSD  
09:52:44 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

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

09:52:59 Rep. Tom France  
09:53:15 Jason Mohr, LSD  
09:53:40 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
09:54:01 Rep. Steve Gist  
09:54:59 Sen. Pat Flowers  
09:58:01 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:00:26 Sen. Pat Flowers  
10:00:51 Rep. Steve Gist  
10:01:41 Sen. Pat Flowers  
10:01:53 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:02:12 Rep. Steve Gist

**Public Comment**

10:03:21 None

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:03:59 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
10:05:03 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
10:05:24 Jason Mohr, LSD

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 62 - STUDY OF WILDFIRE PREVENTION / RESILIENCE**

10:09:08 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

10:11:24 Nate Linder, Director, Wildfire Operations, NorthWestern Energy (NWE)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

**Public Comment**

10:49:46 Maddy Tyson, Montana Dakota Utilities Resources Group Inc.

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

10:50:32 Brian Yablonski  
10:50:55 Nate Linder, NWE  
10:52:39 Jon Metropoulos  
10:52:56 Nate Linder, NWE  
10:55:15 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
10:56:05 Nate Linder, NWE  
10:58:59 Jim Keane  
10:59:21 Nate Linder, NWE  
11:01:37 Jim Keane  
11:02:03 Joe Kolman, Government Affairs Director, Montana Cooperatives Association  
11:02:59 Jason Mohr, LSD  
11:05:23 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
  
11:06:07 **Recessed**  
13:00:27 **Reconvened**

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 42 - STUDY OF NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL**

**Draft Findings**

13:00:46 Jason Mohr, Legislative Environmental Analyst, Legislative Services Division  
(LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 6](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

13:03:31 Sen. John Esp  
13:03:37 Jason Mohr, LSD  
13:03:54 Sen. John Esp  
13:04:06 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
13:04:17 Sen. John Esp

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 42 - STUDY OF NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL**

**Legislative History of County Weed Act**

13:04:41 Jason Mohr, LSD  
[EXHIBIT 7](#)

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 42 - STUDY OF NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL**

**Treatment Of Noxious Weeds by Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
(DNRC)**

13:15:48 Parker Osterloh, Land Management Section Supervisor, DNRC  
[EXHIBIT 8](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

13:20:17 Sen. Pat Flowers  
13:20:44 Parker Osterloh, DNRC  
13:24:41 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
13:25:09 Parker Osterloh, DNRC  
13:26:37 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
13:27:07 Parker Osterloh, DNRC  
13:29:14 Rep. Joshua Seckinger

**Public Comment**

13:31:00 Becky Kington, Executive Director, Montana Weed Control Association (MWCA)  
[EXHIBIT 9](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

13:37:32 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
13:38:27 Becky Kington, MWCA  
13:38:48 Amber Burch, Weed Coordinator, Beaverhead Co.  
13:40:05 Rep. Steve Gist  
13:40:41 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
13:42:35 Jasmine Chaffee, Noxious Weed Division, Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA)  
13:43:27 Rep. Steve Gist  
13:43:54 Jasmine Chaffee, MDA  
13:45:18 Rep. Tom France  
13:46:19 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
13:47:02 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
13:47:29 Jon Metropoulos  
13:48:07 Becky Kington, MWCA  
13:48:16 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
13:49:01 Jon Metropoulos  
13:49:22 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
13:50:20 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
13:50:58 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
13:54:04 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
13:54:41 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
13:56:51 Rep. Shannon Maness  
13:57:04 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
13:58:15 Rep. Shannon Maness  
14:00:09 Rep. Tom France

14:01:23 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:02:23 Rep. Tom France  
14:02:41 Rep. Joshua Seckinger  
14:05:54 Becky Kington, MWCA  
14:07:25 Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy  
14:08:58 Amber Burch, Beaverhead Co.  
14:10:58 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:11:48 Sen. John Esp  
14:13:23 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:13:54 Becky Kington, MWCA

**Public Comment**

14:14:33 Amy Adler, Weed Coordinator, Rosebud Co.

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

14:19:23 Brian Yablonski  
14:22:03 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:23:22 Sen. Pat Flowers  
14:23:51 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:24:18 Jason Mohr, LSD  
14:24:52 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**Public Comment**

14:25:22 David Burch

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

14:29:07 Jon Metropoulos

**MONTANA INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (MISC) ANNUAL REPORT (80-7-1201)**

14:30:29 Liz Lodman, MISC

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (DEQ) SUBDIVISION REPORT (76-4-116)**

14:46:07 Lyndsey Krywaruchka, Water Quality Division Administrator, DEQ

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

14:57:28 Presiding Officer Paul Fielder  
14:58:24 Sen. Forrest Mandeville  
15:00:11 Lyndsey Krywaruchka, DEQ  
15:01:15 Sen. Forrest Mandeville

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

15:02:12      None

**Committee Discussion / Questions**

15:02:43      Vice Presiding Officer Willis Curdy

15:05:29      Rep. Joshua Seckinger

15:07:21      Presiding Officer Paul Fielder

**RECESS UNTIL 5/13/2026**

Recess: 15:08:09