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ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY INTERIM COMMITTEE
69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS	HOUSE MEMBERS	COMMITTEE STAFF
Gregg Hunter	Bob Carter	Griffin Burns – Lead Staff
Gayle Lammers	Becky Edwards – Vice Presiding Officer	Jacelyn Sterling – Research Assistant
Christopher Pope	Gary Parry	Jameson Walker – Legal Staff
Daniel Zolnikov – Presiding Officer	Kerri Seekins-Crowe	
	Katie Zolnikov	

MINUTES LOG

July 16, 2026
Room 154
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:
Sen. Christopher Pope (D)
Sen. Daniel Zolnikov, Presiding Officer (R)
Sen. Gregg Hunter (R)
Sen. Gayle Lammers (R)
Rep. Katie Zolnikov (R)
Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R)
Rep. Gary Parry (R)
Rep. Bob Carter (D)
Rep. Becky Edwards, Vice Presiding Officer (D)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:
Griffin Burns, Lead Staff
Jameson Walker, Legal Staff
Jolanda Songer, Secretary

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

AGENDA

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

09:01:14 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

RESOURCE ADEQUACY AND THE ENERGY TRANSITION IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

09:02:23 Arne Olson, Senior Partner, Energy and Environmental Economics (E3)

EXHIBIT 1

Public Comment

09:41:21 Ann Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center

09:44:32 Brian Dekiep, Northwest Power and Conservation Council

09:45:40 Derek Coleman, Northwest Energy Coalition

09:47:56 Jeff Edmunds, Not My Bill

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:48:38 Sen. Christopher Pope

09:50:27 Arne Olson, E3

MONTANA ENERGY BUSINESS ALLIANCE PRESENTATION

09:52:41 Heather McDowell, Legal and External Affairs, Sibanye-Stillwater & Montana Energy Business Alliance (MEBA)

EXHIBIT 2

Public Comment

10:05:57 Bruce Spencer, Renewable Northwest

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:10:39 Rep. Gary Parry

10:11:02 Heather McDowell, Sibanye-Stillwater & MEBA

10:11:22 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

10:12:51 Heather McDowell, Sibanye-Stillwater & MEBA

10:16:47 Rep. Gary Parry

10:17:04 Rep. Bob Carter

10:17:35 Heather McDowell, Sibanye-Stillwater & MEBA

MONTANA DATA CENTERS - ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND RESOURCE DEMANDS

10:21:03 Bob Morris, Lance Energy Chair, Montana Technological University (M Tech)

EXHIBIT 3

Public Comment

10:55:06 Jeff Edmunds, Not My Bill

10:58:29 Derek Goldman, Northwest Energy Coalition

10:59:05 Ann Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:03:18 Rep. Bob Carter
11:03:35 Bob Morris, M Tech
11:04:44 Rep. Gary Parry
11:04:51 Bob Morris, M Tech
11:05:05 Sen. Christopher Pope
11:05:56 Bob Morris, M Tech

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 051 - "NEW LARGE LOADS TO BE SERVED BY A PUBLIC

11:06:48 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards assumed the position of Presiding Officer.
11:07:11 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov
EXHIBIT 4

Public Comment

11:21:53 Jeff Edmunds, Not My Bill
11:33:46 Steve Wade, NorthWestern Energy
11:35:03 Derek Coleman, Northwest Energy Coalition
11:39:05 Ann Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center
11:43:40 Thor Nelson, Montana Large Customer Group (LCG)

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:50:35 Rep. Katie Zolnikov
11:50:50 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov
11:55:46 Rep. Bob Carter
11:57:17 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov
12:00:57 Rep. Bob Carter
12:01:19 Thor Nelson, LCG
12:03:54 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov
12:04:19 Sen. Gary Parry
12:04:35 Jeff Edmonds, Not My Bill

12:05:30 **Recessed**
13:08:19 **Reconvened**

ENERGY TASK FORCE & PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION UPDATE
PSC Status of Dockets and Litigation

13:09:16 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov resumed the position of Presiding Officer.
13:09:24 Jamie Petersen, Public Service Commission (PSC)
13:10:20 Michael Turner, External Affairs Coordinator, PSC

13:11:08 Rep. Bob Carter

13:11:17 Michael Turner, PSC

EXHIBIT 5

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:16:59 None

Public Comment

13:17:04 None

THE UNTAPPED GRID FOLLOW-UP LEGISLATION IDEAS

13:17:36 Sen. Christopher Pope

13:18:50 Ian Magruder, Founder & Executive Director, Utilize Coalition

EXHIBIT 6

13:20:18 Rep. Katie Zolnikov left the meeting.

13:22:06 Molly Knoll, Align Energy Advisors

Public Comment

13:28:36 Nick Fitzmaurice, Montana Environmental Information Center

13:29:30 Derek Coleman, Northwest Energy Coalition

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:29:34 Rep. Gary Parry

13:29:53 Molly Knoll, Align Energy Advisors

13:30:35 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

13:30:51 Sen. Christopher Pope

13:31:36 Ian Magruder, Utilize Coalition

13:31:59 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Motion

13:34:19 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov moved to draft a committee bill for grid utilization.

Vote

14:11:20 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

ENERGY TASK FORCE & PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION UPDATE - Continued

Energy Task Force Update

13:35:02 Sonja Nowakowski, Director, Department of Environmental Quality

EXHIBIT 7

Public Comment

13:45:43 None

Committee Questions / Discussion
13:45:50 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 010 & 011 - REVISING LAWS RELATED TO GEOTHERMAL ENERGY
13:47:00 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards

EXHIBIT 8

EXHIBIT 9

Public Comment
13:54:51 Charles Denowh, United Property Owners of Montana

13:55:59 Nick Fitzmaurice, Montana Environmental Information Center

13:57:41 Bob Morris, Lance Energy Chair, Montana Tech

13:58:47 Sonja Nowakowski, Director, Department of Environmental Quality

13:59:22 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Committee Questions / Discussion
13:59:46 Rep. Gary Parry

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 008 & 009 - SB 212 & SB 297 (2025) CLEAN-UP
14:01:03 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards assumed the position of Presiding Officer.

14:01:26 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov

EXHIBIT 10

Motion
14:02:49 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov moved to make the proposed change to PD 08.

12:14:42 Rep. Gary Parry Moved

Vote
14:11:55 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

14:02:52 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

EXHIBIT 11

Public Comment
14:04:43 None

Committee Questions / Discussion
14:04:45 None

Motion
14:04:48 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov moved to make the proposed changes to PD 09.

Vote

14:12:38 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

14:06:15 **Recessed**

14:19:06 **Reconvened**

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 021 - GENERALLY REVISING CONSUMER PROTECTION LAWS

14:19:14 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards assumed the position of Presiding Officer.

14:19:33 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov

EXHIBIT 12

Public Comment

14:30:19 Bridger Mahlum, Broadband Montana

14:32:58 Rose Feliciano, Director, TechNet Northwest

14:35:48 Derek VanLuchene, East Helena

14:39:52 Amy Bos, Vice President of Government Affairs, NetChoice

14:43:21 Jeromy Pankratz, Public Policy Manager, META

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:49:12 Sen. Bob Carter

14:50:26 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov

14:54:23 Acting Presiding Officer Becky Edwards

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 004 & 005 - RAILROAD CROSSINGS & EQUAL TREATMENT OF RAILROAD ROW USERS

14:59:56 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division

EXHIBIT 13

EXHIBIT 14

15:00:28 Sen. Daniel Zolnikov resumed the position of Presiding Officer

Public Comment

15:00:22 Jennifer Olson, Montana League of Cities and Towns

EXHIBIT 15

15:05:07 Matt Jones, Public Affairs General Director, BNSF Railway

15:09:19 Bridger Mahlum, Broadband Montana

15:12:10 Joe Kolman, Policy Consultant, CSG West

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:13:20 None

PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION 006 - COMMUNITY SOLAR

15:14:21 Sen. Christopher Pope

EXHIBIT 16

Public Comment

15:31:13 Aimee Grmoljez, Montana-Dakota Utilities

15:32:58 Nick Fitzmaurice, Montana Environmental Information Center

15:33:33 Steve Wade, Northwestern Energy

15:34:03 Derek Coleman, Northwest Energy Coalition

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:35:29 Rep. Bob Carter

15:35:47 Sen. Christopher Pope

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF ETIC

15:40:37 Emilia Gilsdorf, Tech Montana

COMMITTEE WORK SESSION

15:42:50 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

15:46:36 Rep. Seekins-Crowe

15:46:56 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

15:50:37 Griffin Burns, LSD

15:51:33 Sen. Christopher Pope

15:52:01 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 15:52:29