



## **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**

March 10, 2026  
Room 154 & 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:**

Sen. Ellie Boldman, Vice Presiding Officer (D)  
Rep. Ed Buttrey (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)

#### **MEMBERS EXCUSED:**

Sen. Kenneth Bogner (R)  
Rep. Brandon Ler (R)  
Rep. Morgan Thiel (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**

- 09:00:53 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. The committee secretary took roll.
- 09:00:56 Presiding Officer Brandon Ler joined the meeting on Zoom. Presiding Officer Brandon Ler requested for Sen. Mark Noland to assume the position of Presiding Officer before the start of the meeting.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE RULE REVIEW**

- 09:02:54 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 1](#)
- 09:05:15 Rep. Morgan Thiel joined the meeting.

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

- 09:06:44 None

#### **AGENCY OVERSIGHT: GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 09:07:24 Mark Blasdel, Director, Governor's Office of Economic Development

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

- 09:16:44 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland
- 09:17:08 Director Mark Blasdel, Governor's Office of Economic Development
- 09:18:18 Rep. Ed Buttrey

#### **Public Comment**

- 09:18:41 None

#### **EMERGING ISSUES: AUTO-INSURANCE RIGHT TO APPRAISAL**

##### **Panelist Introductions**

- 09:19:09 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland
- 09:20:47 Sen. Kenneth Bogner joined the meeting.
- 09:21:27 Melissa Lewis, Montana Collision Repair Association (MCRA)
- 09:21:52 Erica Eversman, Automotive Education and Policy Institute (AEPI)
- 09:22:21 Robert McDorman, Auto Claim Specialists
- 09:22:46 Robert Passmore, Department Vice President, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA)
- 09:23:02 Brandon Vick, Regional Vice President for the Northwest Region, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)

##### **Panelist Presentations**

- 09:23:27 Melissa Lewis, MCRA

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

[EXHIBIT 3](#)

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

09:30:05 Erica Eversman, AEPI

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

09:45:47 Robert McDorman, Auto Claims Specialists

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

09:59:52 Robert Passmore, APCIA

10:06:23 Brandon Vick, NAMIC

### **Public Comment**

10:14:06 Frank Cote

10:15:54 Charles Robinson, Montana Chamber of Commerce

10:18:00 Bruce Spencer, NAMIC

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

[EXHIBIT 12](#)

10:27:05 Gregory Van Horsen, State Farm Insurance Company

### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

10:29:01 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

10:29:50 Frank Cote

10:32:09 Rep. Brian Close

10:32:42 Robert McDorman, Auto Claims Specialists

10:33:37 Erica Eversman, AEPI

10:35:57 Brandon Vick, NAMIC

10:36:31 Rep. Ed Buttrey

10:37:02 Brandon Vick, NAMIC

10:38:59 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, Commissioner of Securities & Insurance (CSI), State Auditor's Office

10:41:00 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

10:41:24 Trevor Graff, CSI

10:41:34 Rep. Nelly Nicol

10:41:52 Trevor Graff, CSI

10:44:48 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

10:45:07 Erica Eversman, AEPI

10:45:15 Rep. Nelly Nicol

10:47:07 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

10:47:24 Brandon Vick, NAMIC  
10:49:17 Erica Eversman, AEPI  
10:51:31 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
10:52:23 Bruce Spencer, NAMIC  
10:55:12 Rep. Brandon Ler  
10:57:12 Robert Passmore, NAMIC  
11:03:32 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
11:05:26 Erica Eversman, AEPI  
11:06:46 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

11:07:12 **Recessed**

11:15:03 **Reconvened**

## **MEMBER TOPIC: ROBOTICS, AI, AND MT WORKFORCE**

### **Panelist Presentations**

11:15:05 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
11:15:36 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
11:16:42 Lucas Rowsey, IT & Data Special Projects Coordinator, Office of Public Instruction (OPI)  
[EXHIBIT 13](#)  
11:21:04 Jason Neiffer, Executive Director, Montana Digital Academy (MTDA)  
[EXHIBIT 14](#)  
11:28:46 Joseph Thiel, Director of Academic Policy and Research, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)  
11:37:54 Crystal Armstrong, Administrator, Workforce Services, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)  
[EXHIBIT 15](#)

### **Public Comment**

11:48:33 None

### **Committee Questions / Discussion**

11:49:11 Rep. Peter Strand  
11:50:26 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
11:50:38 Crystal Armstrong, DLI  
11:54:31 Rep. Jamie Isaly  
11:55:46 Rep. Morgan Thiel  
11:55:58 Jason Neiffer, Montana Digital Academy (MTDA)  
11:57:24 Joseph Thiel, OCHE  
12:03:17 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
12:04:03 Joseph Thiel, OCHE

12:06:57     **Recessed**  
13:04:10     **Reconvened**

**MEMBER TOPIC: GAMBLING**

13:04:33     Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
              [EXHIBIT 16](#)  
              [EXHIBIT 17](#)  
              [EXHIBIT 18](#)

13:05:46     Alex Sterhan, Administrator, Gambling Control Division (GCD)

13:12:35     Gary Koeplin, Executive Secretary, Montana Board of Horse Racing (MBHR)

13:18:12     Anne Charpentier, Marketing and Sales Director, Montana Lottery  
(See Exhibit 15)  
(See Exhibit 16)

13:22:47     Sarah Filosa, Public Policy, Sports Betting Alliance (SBA)  
(See Exhibit 17)

13:30:08     Brad Longcake, Government Affairs, Montana Council on Problem Gambling  
(MTCPG)  
[EXHIBIT 19](#)  
[EXHIBIT 20](#)  
[EXHIBIT 21](#)

**Public Comment**

13:35:06     John Iverson, Montana Tavern Association (MTA)

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

13:38:02     Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

13:40:15     Alex Sterhan, GCD

13:43:17     Sarah Filosa, SBA

13:44:51     Rep. Nelly Nicol

13:45:44     Anne Charpentier, Montana Lottery

13:47:09     Brad Longcake, MTCPG

13:48:55     Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

13:49:02     Rep. Ed Buttrey

13:51:51     Vice Chair Ellie Boldman

13:52:43     Alex Sterhan, GCD

13:53:24     Rep. Peter Strand

13:54:10     Brad Longcake, MTCPG

13:55:04     Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

13:57:25     Rep. Ed Buttrey

13:58:04     John Iverson, MTA

13:58:38     Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

13:59:07     Gary Koeplin, MBHR

13:59:36     Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

14:00:15     **Recessed**  
14:10:56     **Reconvened**

**HJ 55: PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LICENSING AND PRACTICE**

14:11:24     Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
                  [EXHIBIT 22](#)  
                  [EXHIBIT 23](#)  
                  [EXHIBIT 24](#)

14:12:35     Kevin Bragg, Licensing Bureau Chief, Department of Labor & Industry (DLI)

14:15:56     Jerrica Seilstad, Big Sky Montana Chapter President, National Association of Residential Property Managers (NARPM)  
(See Exhibit 22)

14:21:41     Sarnen Steinbarth, Course Instructor, Montana Property Education  
(See Exhibit 23)

14:24:29     John Sinrud, State President, Montana Landlords Association (MLA)

14:28:44     Amy Hall, Housing Senior Attorney, Montana Legal Services Association (MLSA)  
(See Exhibit 24)

**Public Comment**

14:38:20     John Rhoads, Catalyst Montana  
                  [EXHIBIT 25](#)

14:42:20     Annie Kremin – Eckert, NARPM

14:43:58     Margret Morgan  
                  [EXHIBIT 26](#)

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

14:54:12     Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

14:56:52     Amy Hall, MLSA

15:00:13     John Sinrud, MLA

15:05:31     Rep. Ed Buttrey

15:05:59     John Sinrud, MLA

15:09:18     Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

15:10:12     Kevin Bragg, DLI

**MEMBER TOPIC - INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES: KRATOM AND ALTERNATIVE BEVERAGES**

15:15:04     Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

15:15:55     Steve Crawford, Narcotics Bureau Chief, Department of Justice (DOJ)  
                  [EXHIBIT 27](#)

15:23:12     Diana Eberlein, Chair, Coalition for Adult Beverage Alternatives (CABA)

[EXHIBIT 28](#)

**Public Comment**

15:34:55 Jennifer Hensley, Fidelity Diagnostics Laboratory

15:38:32 Amanda Cahill, Confluence Public Health Alliance

[EXHIBIT 29](#)

[EXHIBIT 30](#)

15:41:12 Kate Cholewa, Montana Cannabis Industry Association

15:46:32 EJ Redding, Yellowstone County Businesses involving Kava and Kratom products

15:50:47 Scott Boulanger, American Kratom Association (AKA)

15:51:55 Leanna Troesh, Addictions Counselor & Mental Health Therapist

15:57:09 Joanna Barney, Montana's Regulated THC Industry

16:02:30 Kelli McCann

16:05:50 Jay Yeager

16:10:05 Catherine Cornell

16:11:42 Susan Cave

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

16:15:32 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

16:17:25 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

16:18:20 Amanda Cahill, Confluence Public Health Alliance

16:18:48 Rep. Ed Buttrey

16:19:02 Matthew Weaver, LSD

16:19:18 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

16:19:32 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

16:19:48 Rep. Brandon Ler

16:23:18 Scott Boulanger, AKA

**EMERGING ISSUES: RURAL VETERINARIANS**

16:26:23 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland left the meeting. Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman assumed the position of Acting Presiding Officer.

16:26:24 Acting Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

16:26:54 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 31](#)

[EXHIBIT 32](#)

16:27:42 Dr. Katie Rein, Crazy Mountain Veterinary Clinic

16:33:53 Clint Peck, Contributing Editor, Beef Magazine / Farm Progress Companies

16:40:12 Dr. Barr Gustafson, Montana Veterinary Medical Association

16:41:42 Sen. Mark Noland joined the meeting.

**Public Comment**

16:42:04 Joslyn Cahill, Rocky Vista University College of Veterinary Medicine

[EXHIBIT 33](#)

[EXHIBIT 34](#)

[EXHIBIT 35](#)

16:42:56 Rep. Randyn Greg, House District 78  
16:43:36 John Brewer, Billings Montana Chamber of Commerce

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

16:44:55 Rep. Jamie Isaly  
16:45:45 Rep. Randyn Greg, House District 78  
16:47:14 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman  
16:47:33 Rep. Randyn Greg, House District 78  
16:49:56 Dr. Katie Rein, Crazy Mountain Veterinary Clinic  
16:50:42 Sen. Mark Noland assumed the position of Acting Presiding Officer.  
16:50:51 Rep. Jamie Isaly  
16:51:30 Joslyn Cahill, Rocky Vista University College of Veterinary Medicine

**COMMISSIONER OF SECURITIES & INSURANCE (CSI) UPDATE: PROGRESS REPORT – HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION (HJ) 61 DATA CALL AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG MEETINGS**

**HJ 61 Data Call**

16:53:12 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
16:53:24 Trevor Graff, Government Affairs Director, CSI, State Auditor's Office  
16:55:52 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

**Progress On the Pharmacy Supply Chain Working Group**

16:56:15 Trevor Graff, CSI

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

16:58:52 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland  
16:58:54 Trevor Graff, CSI  
17:00:52 Rep. Ed Buttrey  
17:01:03 Trevor Graff, CSI  
17:01:36 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION (SJ) 11: REVIEW OF PROVISIONAL DRAFT LEGISLATION**

17:02:06 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 36](#)

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

17:03:35 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

**Public Comment**

17:04:03 None

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

17:04:11 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman moved to adopt the proposed draft language for SJ 11 and move forward with the bill as a committee bill.

**Discussion on the Motion**

17:04:37 Jameson Walker Legal Staff, LSD  
17:04:58 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie  
17:05:03 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

**Vote**

17:05:46 Carried unanimously by voice vote.  
Sen. Kenneth Bogner and Rep. Brandon Ler voted 'aye' by proxy.

**Discussion on the Vote**

17:06:17 Maddelyn Pennington, Secretary, LSD

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION (HJ) 61: STAFF REVIEW OF EXAMPLE LEGISLATION - INSURANCE DISCOUNTS**

17:06:42 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)  
[EXHIBIT 37](#)  
17:11:50 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

**Public Comment**

17:12:22 None

**Committee Questions / Discussion**

17:12:47 None

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

17:13:36 Cindy Patterson  
[EXHIBIT 38](#)  
[EXHIBIT 39](#)  
[EXHIBIT 40](#)  
[EXHIBIT 41](#)  
[EXHIBIT 42](#)  
[EXHIBIT 43](#)  
[EXHIBIT 44](#)  
[EXHIBIT 45](#)  
17:15:49 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

**WORK SESSION: COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND MEETING WRAP UP**

**Summary of Previous Meetings & Committee Tasks**

17:17:04 Matthew Weaver, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 46](#)

17:17:50 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

17:18:22 Rep. Brandon Ler

17:19:32 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

**Next Meeting**

17:20:10 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

17:20:33 Matthew Weaver, LSD

17:20:49 Rep. Brandon Ler

17:21:06 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

**Summary of Proposed Legislation**

17:23:34 Matthew Weaver, LSD

17:24:17 Vice Presiding Officer Ellie Boldman

17:24:46 Acting Presiding Officer Mark Noland

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 17:27:19