

## MINUTES

### MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 51st LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

#### COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION

Call to Order: By Chairman Bob Bachini, on March 15th 1989, at 3:40 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

Members Present: All members were present

Members Excused: none

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Ms. Connie Erickson, Legislative Council and Ms. Maureen Cleary, Committee Secretary

Announcements/Discussion: Rep. Stepler: Reported back to the Committee the findings of the sub-committee assigned to Senate Bill 111. Stating the bill as amended reflected a "compromise" between all parties involved. Researcher, Ms. Erickson: Provided clarification of amendments. Questions were raised from the Committee regarding federal laws for prescription drugs and administration of those drugs, specific procedures carried out by lay-persons and veterinarians and the composition of the Advisory Board. No further discussion or action was taken on this bill at this time.

Rep. Bachini: Opened discussion on Senate Bill 432. Concerns were expressed by several of the Committee members regarding secret balloting, right to privacy, requirements of county treasurers, liability issues and irrigation districts responsibilities. Ms. Jo Brunner: Made clarification on the intent of a portion of the bill. Stating the intent of involving the treasurers office was at the "voluntary request" from the irrigation district. The Irrigation Board must request in writing any appointment or involvement of the treasurers office. The intent was never that this be mandatory. But always voluntary. Decided between the treasurer and the Board of Irrigation Districts. Rep. Hanson: made the motion to reinstate the language "may receive assistance from" and strike "shall appoint". The Committee voted on this amendment and passed it unanimously. Rep. Guthrie: Stated it was the original intent the district offices would manage the issuing, collection and bookwork. Then send the monies to the treasurer, that this would speed up the process. All the work would be done at the District offices. Researcher, Ms. Erickson: Clarified the amendments. No further amendments or discussion was continued. Rep. Bachini: Requested the Committee delay any

further action until a later date. As some of the Committee members wished to check with thier constiuents.

HEARING ON HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 31

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

Rep. Vernon Westlake: House District #76. This bill will honor the 75th anniversary of the Smith Labor Act of May 8th 1914. Recognizing it's roll in establishing our State Extension Service. This an appropriate opportunity for agriculture to credit the accomplishments made by the State Extension Service.

Testifying Proponents and Who They Represent:

Mr. LeRoy Luft/ MT. Extension Service, Helena

Ms. Kay Norenberg/ Women Involved in Farm Economics, Helena

Ms. Carol Moser/ MT. Stockgrowers Assoc., MT. Cattlewomen's Assoc., Helena

Proponent Testimony:

Mr. Luft: With a 20% reduction in our budget, the extension service has gone through some hard times in the last two years. We have managed the reduction well. One aspect of this resolution is that it does not ask for an appropriation. We urge your support.

Ms. Norenberg: We wish to be recorded in support of this resolution.

Ms. Moser: We, also, wish to be recorded in support of this resolution.

Testifying Opponents and Who They Represent:

none

Opponent Testimony:

none

Questions From Committee Members:

none

Closing by Sponsor:

Rep. Westlake: I urge your support of this joint resolution.

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 31

Motion: Rep. Westlake: made the motion "do pass"

Discussion: none

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: none

Recommendation and Vote: THEREFORE, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A  
"DO PASS" FOR THIS BILL.

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 769

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

Rep. Jim Elliott: House District #51. The purpose of this bill is to promote agriculture research and education at Montana State University. This bill will establish an advisory commission which will report back to the legislature for appropriations. The agriculture markets in the world are changing therefore study and research is needed. This is a tremendous opportunity to develop economic growth in our districts.

Testifying Proponents and Who They Represent:

Mr. Al Kurkie/ Alternative Energy Resource Organization, Helena

Mr. Bob Quinn/ farmer, Big Sandy

Mr. Dave McClure/ farmer, President, MT Farm Bureau, Lewistown

Mr. Ed Butcher/ rancher

Rep. John Patterson/ House District #97

Mr. LeRoy Luft/ MT. Extension Service, Helena

Ms. Peggy Haaglund/ Ex. Vice-Pres., MT. Association of Conservation Districts

Ms. Carol Moser/ MT. Stockgrowers, MT. Cattle Women, MT. Farmers Union, MT. Grange and MT. Assoc. of State Grazing Districts

Mr. Richard Tilgas/ rancher, Chester, Vice-Chairman of the State Advisory Committee to the experiment systems, member of the Alternative Energy Resource Organization Task Force

Mr. Mike Craig/ self, Bozeman

Proponent Testimony:

Mr. Kurkie: (See Exhibit #1)

Mr. Quinn: (See Exhibit #2)

Mr. McClure: We support the concept of this bill. Additional research in the area of agriculture would be useful to many people in the state.

Mr. Butcher: I realize that money in Montana is tight and legislatures are facing increasing financial demands with a small tax base draw. Montana is a raw material producing state and does not have the luxury of the added value of a manufacturing state tax base to draw on. This bill is important to continue research to assist the farmers, ranchers and consumers of this state. This will help the economy.

Rep. Patterson: This resolution will give us the opportunity to explore areas of study within agriculture that are important. This is an investment for Montana's economic future.

Mr. Luft: This bill will address the additional requests that have been made by the experimental station at MSU. This program is a solution and an investment for the state of Montana.

Ms. Haaglund: We support this bill. We have several districts that have limited involvement and we feel the programs should be expanded. The Missoula Conservation District received monies for research on a natural fungus making it host specific to kill knapweed and dandelions. This is of special importance to the state of Montana. This is just an example of what funding in research can do for the state.

Ms. Moser: We support the concept of this bill. Although we do recognize that this bill will not be an answer to all of our agriculture questions it can be helpful in many important areas.

Mr. Tilgas: This bill is important for the future of agriculture in our state. Alternative agriculture has been consistently on the top of our priority. During the last three years our organization has done nothing but cut programs, in order to keep a core-program functioning. The administration in Bozeman has been very supportive of our concepts. But they too have their priorities. Many of us in agriculture feel it is time to re-learn non-chemical types of farming. The time is coming when the American people will demand that we produce a chemical free food supply. We need to be prepared for those possibilities. And it takes years to develop new methods of farming. The research must be region specific, and it must begin soon.

Mr. Craig: I have spent over two years in study and research regarding the problems and practices associated with irrigation in the state. Sections of the state are in

desperate need of further information and data base with respect to agricultural production. The most practical use of Montana's agricultural land is dependent on wise use of, and proper, land practices. That results in a respect and understanding for the land. I am here on behalf of a continuation of a tradition and livelihood in Montana. Our farms and ranches.

Testifying Opponents and Who They Represent:

none

Opponent Testimony:

none

Questions From Committee Members:

REP. WESTLAKE: What is the priority for low-input sustainable agricultural research in your programs? MR. LUFT: It is one of the top priorities we have. Currently, I don't feel that it is as high on the priority list as it should be. We've had a lot of budget cuts in the past few years and have not been able to give it the priority that we would like to.

REP. KELLER: How many experimental stations do you currently have in operation? MR. LUFT: Currently, we have seven. Each of the seven stations has a local advisory committee. From those groups one individual is selected to represent that advisory committee for the state meetings. REP. KELLER: Do those members receive compensation? MR. LUFT: They receive milage and reimbursement of expenses.

REP. DRISCOLL: How many persons are on this advisory committee? MR. LUFT: It could be up to twelve or fifteen. MR. KURKIE: Our intent was to describe the committee make-up and not concentrate on numbers. REP. DRISCOLL: In order to get an appropriation. Someone had to come up with a number in order to get that amount. MR. KURKIE: We came up with an advisory structure, any particular dollar amount could be taken from any line item. MR. LUFT: The figure of \$356,000.00, is the figure that we had in our modification when we submitted it. Some of the dollars are there for operations we did not, at that time, specify reimbursement.

Closing by Sponsor:

Rep. Elliott: I believe there would be no problem removing the advisory committee, if that is an objection of this committee. If the Advisory Committee could be utilized on another type of oversight council. That would be more than likely, agreeable to all parties concerned. Additional agricultural research would add to the prestige of MSU and to the state of Montana.

DISPOSITION OF HOUSE BILL 769

Motion: Rep. DeMars: made the motion "do pass"

Discussion: none

Amendments, Discussion, and Votes: Rep. Patterson: made the motion "do pass" on amendments. A vote was taken and amendments passed (See Standing Committee Report).

Recommendation and Vote: THEREFORE, THE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS A "DO PASS AS AMENDED" FOR THIS BILL.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment At: 5:45 p.m.

  
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REP. BOB BACHINI, Chairman

BB/mc

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DAILY ROLL CALL

AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE

50th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1989

Date 3/15/89

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
Rep. Bob Bachini, Chairman	✓		
Rep. Francis Koehnke, Vice Ch.	✓		
Rep. Gene DeMars	✓		
Rep. Jerry Driscoll	✓		
Rep. Jim Elliot	✓		
Rep. Linda Nelson	✓		
Rep. Bob Ream	✓		
Rep. Don Stepler	✓		
Rep. Vernon Westlake	✓		
Rep. Duane Compton	✓		
Rep. Orval Ellison	✓		
Rep. Bert Guthrie	✓		
Rep. Marian Hanson	✓		
Rep. Harriet Hayne	✓		
Rep. Betty Lou Kasten	✓		
Rep. Vernon Keller	✓		
Rep. John Patterson	✓		

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

3/15

March 16, 1989

Page 1 of 1

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation report that House Joint Resolution 31 (first reading copy -- white) do pass .

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Bob Bachini, Chairman

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

March 16, 1989

Page 1 of 1

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation report that House Bill 769 (first reading copy -- white) do pass as amended .

Signed: Bob Bachini

Bob Bachini, Chairman

And, that such amendments read:

1. Page 3, line 25.

Strike: section 4 in its entirety

Renumber: subsequent sections

2. Page 5, lines 1 through 3.

Following: "[this act]" on line 1

Strike: remainder of line 1 through "[section 4]" on line 3



exhibit #1  
3/15  
HB 769

**Alternative Energy Resources Organization**  
44 N. Last Chance Gulch, #9, Helena, Montana 59601  
406-443-7272

EXHIBIT #1  
DATE 3/15/89  
HB 769

**Testimony presented to the  
House Agriculture Committee by Al Kurki of the  
Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO)  
March 15, 1989**

I am here to urge this committee to support the proposed low-input sustainable agriculture research and extension program.

What is low input sustainable agriculture?

Sustainable agriculture is characterized as those practices that are both economically viable and ecologically sound over the long term. Sustainable farming or ranching systems tend to be 1) less dependent on expensive, energy-intensive commercial inputs, 2) resource conserving, using good stewardship and animal husbandry, 3) market sensitive, and 4) diversified and adaptive.

Why is this program necessary?

Health, safety and environmental concerns, as well as interest in higher-value non-program crops and in reducing operating costs have spurred many Montana farmers to seek information on sustainable farming practices even though so little regionally-applicable information is available.

While the economic squeeze of spiraling farm operating costs and declining commodity prices has recently eased, pesticides and fertilizers are still the largest share of energy consumed on farms and ranches. Contamination of groundwater, particularly from nitrates, severe soil erosion and declining soil organic matter levels are very real problems in Montana.

Why is a separately-funded sustainable agriculture program important?

1) This program would not only boost the level of necessary research activity but can also help tie together the current high-quality (but

somewhat fragmented) research programs in biological pest control, cereal/legume rotation and alternative crops into a unified body of useful information.

- 2) It would improve the Ag Experiment station and Extension capacity and effectiveness in securing the very limited private sector and newly designated USDA funding for Low Input Sustainable Agriculture research and education programs.
- 3) This program represents an investment in local economic development by
  - a) Saving farmers money in operating costs.
  - b) Creating marketable alternative crops that can be raised in rotation.
  - c) Creating high quality, high value crops and food products from conventional commodities, such as organically grown wheat.
  - d) Creating new opportunities for products and services. For example, in 1985, the president of Abbott Laboratories' Agricultural Division was asked by representatives of Governor Schwinden's staff what he felt the top agricultural issues of the next decade would be. He said one word--"groundwater." Abbott made a significant commitment to biological control development. There's no reason why more of that type of business activity can't be generated here if there's a good solid research base from which to work.
- 4) Last, but not least, making a commitment of funds now is a logical next step in an action the legislature set in motion in 1985.

In 1985, both houses of this legislature directed the state ag experiment station and Extension to develop a comprehensive program in sustainable ag. While there was no money in that directive, which passed by overwhelming margin, there was a message--a mandate. MSU took that message seriously.

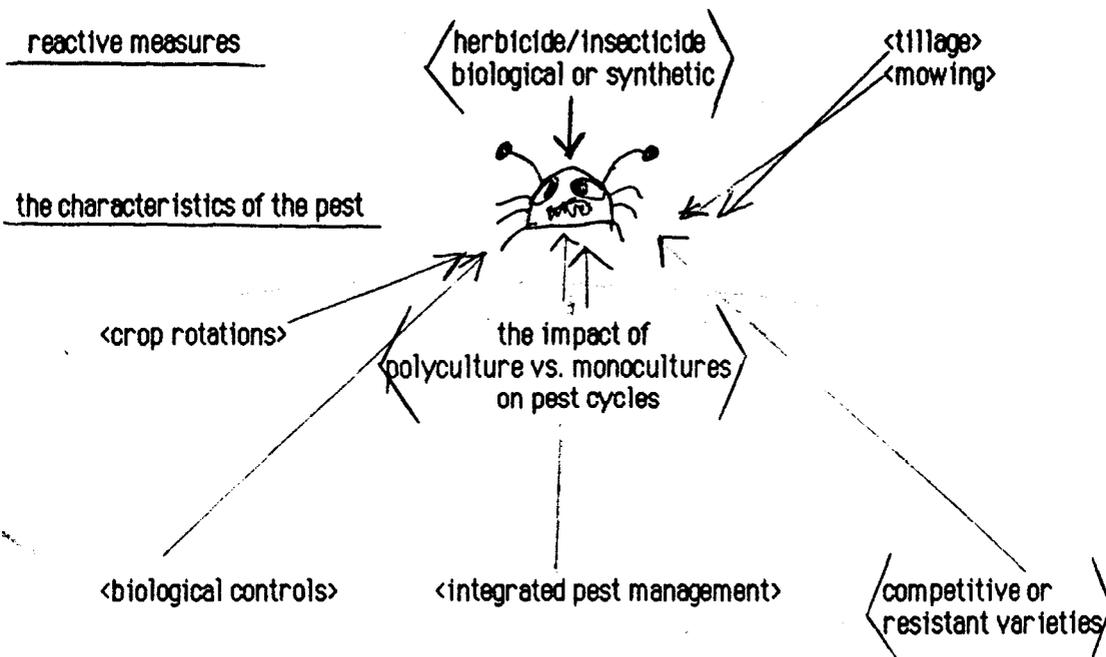
For over three years, Experiment Station and Extension officials met with a committee of farmers and ranchers seeking regionally applicable

sustainable agriculture information. Together, they identified and prioritized the most important research needs in this topic area. MSU expanded its cereal/legume research to more of the state research centers, dedicated a half-time Extension specialist to sustainable agriculture and became a cooperative and active player in a number of farmer and extension agent-level initiatives in this area.

But those of us watching these efforts could see that they were being attempted within the confines of resources already strained to the limit.

I urge you to support this very modest bill. Montana's farmers, consumers and environment will benefit from your positive action.

Sustainable agriculture research could expand the means of achieving farm goals. For example, in pest control much of our research activity focuses on:



This program would place more emphasis on at least two of the six more long-term preventative measures.

exhibit #2  
3/15

TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE AGRICULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEE  
by Robert M. Quinn, Big Sandy, Montana  
March 15, 1989

EXHIBIT #2  
DATE 3/15/89  
HB 769

**INTRODUCTION:**

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. I would like to discuss a subject of great importance to the future of agriculture and agricultural communities in Montana. I am here to speak in support of the low-input sustainable agriculture research and extension program being proposed in HB769. My enthusiastic support of this bill comes from my personal experience as a farmer in Montana. I was raised near Big Sandy, attended local schools, and received a BS and MS from Montana State University. After receiving a PhD in plant biochemistry from the University of California at Davis, California, I went into business for myself near Sacramento. After a couple of years I sold my business interests and returned to the family farm near Big Sandy. When we returned we found a lot of young families were leaving the land. It was my desired to raise my family on the farm. I consider my four daughters as my most important crop. I hoped to provide for my family by growing a high quality wheat. Our family farm is now smaller than the average size farm in Montana and it was soon apparent to me that although it might be big enough to survive on it was certainly not big enough to provide for my children's education nor produce the resources required to buy the place from by parents when that time came.

## MY EXPERIENCE WITH SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:

An opportunity came to me to market my own grain directly about six years ago. This soon led to my establishing a flour mill in Fort Benton so I could add value to my grain by selling it as stone ground whole wheat flour. Because of this new business, I was introduced into the natural food market. There I became acquainted with organic farming. The idea of sustainable agriculture had always appealed to me but I doubted if high quality grain could be produced without the aid of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. After meeting a few farmers who had had some success, however, I ventured to try it myself. I started converting our farm to organic production four years ago a few acres at a time by introducing an alfalfa rotation into our operation. Organic farming does not mean growing crops without chemicals. In a larger sense it means producing better crops through better soil fertility using natural soil building systems like green manures. Since organic crops cannot be planted within two years of the last chemical application, we have only had organic crops from our farm the last two years. Even though these years have been a challenge, I have noticed a few very significant trends. First we have been able to reduce our inputs in fertilizers and chemicals by over \$10,000 per year. For us this has made the difference between going further in debt during these slim years and breaking even. Secondly, we have seen no reduction in yields. And as a bonus the crops we have produced organically are worth more in the market place.

## **THE NEEDS OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:**

This year 25% of our farm will be in organic production and by 1992 it will be 100% if we are able to stay on our time table. Of course there are pitfalls and hazards in this type of farming. This is where we can use your help and the help of research to answer basic questions in sustainable systems. For example how can I best control weeds? I see this as my greatest challenge. What legumes will fix nitrogen most efficiently in our state? Can fungi be used to solubilize insoluble phosphate already in our soil? Answers to these questions could add millions of dollars to the bottom line of Montana farmers. Much of this addition earning would stay in the local communities and of course a portion would be returned to the state in the form of income taxes.

## **BENEFITS TO THE STATE OF MONTANA:**

We are asking for a small commitment of funds but we are expecting a great return in benefits. As long as I remember we have heard talk about progams to save the family farm. When I graduated from Big Sandy High School in 1966 there were over 160 students enrolled in the school. When my daughter graduates next year there will be less than 100. In our community we have seen a steady decline in farms and families to support the community and the state. The scene is the same throughout Montana. I think this trend could be reversed by letting the farm families save the family farm themselves by giving them the tools and information to help them reduce their inputs and produce crops of

higher value. Because this type of agriculture requires more management, there is less time or desire to buy out the neighbors operation and because this type of agriculture produces more return there is less need to expand.

**CONCLUSION:**

There is however a crying need for research. Just as research in the past has brought great strides in production, research in the future can help us produce in a manner that is sustainable, that will stabilize our communities, broaden our tax bases and reduce environmental pollution. This is the type of research I hope you will consider funding. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Testimony H.B. 769  
March 15, 1989

EXHIBIT #3  
DATE 3/15/89  
HB 769

exhibit #3  
3/15/89

#B769

For the record, I am Ed Butcher, a Winifred, Montana rancher.

I realize money in Montana is tight and you legislators are facing increasing financial demands and a small tax base to draw upon. Because of this situation, I applaud your scrutiny of funding programs and I also believe Montanans who have looked to Helena for "pet project" money will have to rely on creative private sources until our National debt and general economic crisis abates.

Montana is a raw material producing State and does not have the luxury of an added value manufacturing tax base to draw upon. What we face is the need to generate more income from raw material production--basically agriculture. A number of years ago I began to realize as a businessman to stay debt free in agriculture I had to cut input costs--not produce more. From contacts with Australians, who have traditionally farmed with little dependence on chemicals and petro-based fertilizers, I learned you could farm on a large scale without these expensive fixed costs which are critical to a volatile weather and market price business which producers have exercised little influence upon.

Although I am primarily a cattle producer, I do farm about 1,000 acres of cereal grains and have not used any petro-fertilizer for nine years and have stopped chemical spraying spring crops for about six years and only occasionally use half rate application of 2-4D on winter wheat for broad-leaf control. I am not a granola nor have I been doing this to be an "organic producer"--it is pure economics.

I do feel farmers have been fed a "bill of goods" by the Chemical company "hipe". Also the international chemical companies have bought off the university systems for years through research grants and used these centers of learning for product promotion.

I can say with a certain degree of pride that Montana State University during the past few years is showing signs of drifting away from that control and is becoming, what I would classify as an open minded educational and research institution committed

to providing sound research information for food production in Montana independent of chemical and fertilizer industry control. This general American phenomenon of industry influence peddling is a contrast to both government and university researchers I met last year in Australia.

H.B.769 is important to continuing MSU's independence in ag research from the influence if not control of the fertilizer-chemical industry. We are all aware of ground water contamination which Montana still has time to deal with, and if you do not see the magnitude of the problem, look at the incredible problems in California and other heavy ag chemical use states. The few hundred thousand dollars in this bill is much cheaper than the State facing problems of chemical crisis and clean up faced in other parts of the Nation and recently surfacing some in Montana.

I can say from experience that you can farm without extensive chemical and petro-chemical use and produce good crops with a lot less expense. However, we need solid research in sustainable farming practices in the Northern plains climate.

I was the first large commercial user of biological grasshopper control in Montana and have maintained acceptable levels of control since 1982 on 13,000 acres. This product was developed in Bozeman through the USDA rangeland laboratory and is a tremendous example of how biological pest control can cut extensively the costly use of chemicals (which generally did not control the problems and new research has now confirmed that wide-spread chemical use in grasshopper control without a biological component actually increased the problem). We need more research in crop rotation, biological insect control, and general soil management if Montana farmers and thus, the Montana economy is to remain viable into the next century.

HR 769 is a major step in that direction and would be a wise investment. I have found the MSU personnel are intellectually interested in sustainable agriculture which is refreshing from a number of years ago when university research could be bought with research dollars and a case subsequently made for a particular product and on that basis farmers poured millions of dollars into the company treasury.

HR 769 will benefit Montana agriculture by providing research for lower input costs and providing farmers with more net income and the State a bigger tax base, plus, providing the consumer with better quality and healthier food. We do not want our food products banned for chemical contamination like the recent ban on apple products which will have long term consequences on that industry. Yet, we need research on how to farm without heavy chemical dependence which is all the American universities have taught for forty years. We have an entire generation of farmers who do not realize food can be grown without chemicals and peto-fertilizers.

In the total University budget, this is a small appropriation, but in the long term consequences of our present course, makes it one of the most critical!

THANK YOU

Edward B. Butcher  
Rolling Hills Ranch  
Winifred, Montana 59489

VISITORS' REGISTER

Agriculture

COMMITTEE

BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

DATE March 15, 1989

SPONSOR \_\_\_\_\_

please indicate bill number

NAME (please print)	RESIDENCE	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
Kay Joenbery	WIFE	HB 769	
VERNON L. KLESYLAK	REP. H.D. 76	HJR 31	
Carol Mosher	mt. Stockgrower-battlestone Orange Farmers Union	HJR 31 HB 769	
Quinn Conner	Rep	SB 711	
Reggie Haaglund	MT Assoc. of Cons Diet	HB-769	
Al Kleck	AKRO	HB 769	
Ed Butcher		HB 769	
Jim Simpson	Farm To Market	HB 769	
Bob Quinn	Big Sandy	HB 769	
LeRoy Lutz	MBU - Bayman	HB 769 HJR 31	
Curt Peck	BILLINGS	HB 769 HJR 31	
Mike Craig	Missoula	HB 769	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR WITNESS STATEMENT FORM.  
PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.



ROLL CALL VOTE

AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK & IRRIGATION COMMITTEE

DATE 3/15 BILL NO. HJR 31 NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	AYE	NAY
BOB BACHINI, CHAIRMAN	✓	
FRANCIS KOENIGKE, VICE CHAIRMAN	✓	
GENE DE MARS	✓	
JERRY DRISCOLL	✓	
JIM ELLIOT	✓	
LINDA NELSON	✓	
BOB REAM	✓	
DON STEPLER	✓	
VERNON WESTLAKE	✓	
DUANE COMPTON	✓	
ORVAL ELLISON	✓	
BERT GUTHRIE	✓	
MARIAN HANSON	✓	
HARRIET HAYNE	✓	
BETTY LOU KASTEN	✓	
VERNON KELLER	✓	
JOHN PATTERSON	✓	

TALLY

17

Mary Lou Schmitz  
Secretary

BOB BACHINI, Chairman  
Chairman

MOTION: rep. westlake "do pass"  
question

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