

MINUTES

MONTANA SENATE
55th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON FISH & GAME

Call to Order: By CHAIRMAN AL BISHOP, on April 10, 1997, at 3:39 p.m., in Room 402

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Sen. Al Bishop, Chairman (R)
Sen. Loren Jenkins, Vice Chairman (R)
Sen. William S. Crismore (R)
Sen. Steve Doherty (D)
Sen. Bea McCarthy (D)
Sen. Kenneth "Ken" Mesaros (R)
Sen. Ken Miller (R)
Sen. Daryl Toews (R)

Members Excused: None

Members Absent: SENATOR MIKE TAYLOR,
SENATOR VIVIAN BROOKE

Staff Present: Leanne Kurtz, Legislative Services Division
Serena Andrew, Committee Secretary

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary:

Hearing(s) & Date(s) Posted: SJR 17, Posted 4/7/97
Executive Action: SJR 17

HEARING ON SJR 17

Sponsor: SENATOR DON HARGROVE, SD #16, Bozeman

Proponents: Ken Hoovestal, Montana Snowmobile Association
Jean Johnson, Executive Director, Montana
Outfitters & Guides Association

Opponents: None

Opening Statement by Sponsor:

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 3:39}

SENATOR DON HARGROVE, SD #16, Bozeman, said the resolution was prompted by information from Senator Burns' office in Great Falls. Yellowstone National Park (YNP) Superintendent Mike Finley has made a number of statements about closing the park, opening the park and shortening the season. People in the gateway communities feel these statements have affected their business. In West Yellowstone, the receipts from the resort tax have gone down for the first time since it was enacted.

SENATOR HARGROVE distributed a draft copy of Senator Burns' proposed bill and several news clippings regarding YNP (**EXHIBIT #1**). The bill will attempt to put into law some things that will address the opening and closing of the various entrances to the park. It is expected that the bill, when completed, will be attached to the appropriation for YNP.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 3:43}

Proponents' Testimony:

Ken Hoovestal, Montana Snowmobilers Association, told the committee that Superintendent Finley and Secretary Babbitt had talked about curtailing traffic into the park - both summer and winter, and there have been attempts to shorten the season. This type of publicity has a strong economic effect on the gateway communities.

The main point of the resolution does not direct the dates, fees or any specifics but it does encourage the park and the Department of Interior to consult with local people. The exact dates in the Burns bill would be set after this consultation.

Jean Johnson, Executive Director, Montana Outfitters & Guides Association, agreed with both **SENATOR HARGROVE** and **Ken Hoovestal** for the reasons they gave.

Questions From Committee Members and Responses:

SENATOR BEA MCCARTHY commented that a park ranger had told her the summer opening is delayed to protect animals during calving season and the bill does not address that issue.

SENATOR HARGROVE said he was sure it should, but people have a right to know what is going to happen. He thought gateway communities should have something to do with park seasons.

SENATOR STEVE DOHERTY agreed that YNP should consult with local communities, but he didn't think those people should tell the Park Service what the seasons should be. In the case of the animals, he didn't think economics should win.

SENATOR HARGROVE said the resolution wasn't law, it was a suggestion of support for Senator Burns. He didn't think there should be winners or losers.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 3:48}

SENATOR DOHERTY stated that the committee was being asked to vote for something and didn't know what it was. He asked what would happen if the final form of Senator Burns' bill banned the use of snowmobiles in the park and the State of Montana were already on record as supporting the bill. He didn't think the resolution was a good idea.

SENATOR HARGROVE said he didn't think there was much risk involved.

SENATOR DOHERTY asked if SENATOR HARGROVE knew how Senator Baucus' felt about the bill.

SENATOR HARGROVE commented that he had been in Senator Baucus' office in Washington, DC last September and Senator Baucus hadn't been asked about it at that time.

{Tape: 1; Side: A; Approx. Time Count: 3:51}

Closing by Sponsor:

SENATOR HARGROVE told the committee he was not a great fan of resolutions, but they do put the legislature on record and might provide some assistance to Senator Burns. The YNP season was shortened about two weeks last year.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SJR 17

Motion: SENATOR LOREN JENKINS moved the bill.

MOTION/VOTE: SENATOR DARYL TOEWS made a substitute motion to TABLE SJR 17. SENATORS JENKINS and MESAROS voted NO; the remainder of the committee voted AYE and the MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 3:54 p.m.



SEN. AL BISHOP, Chairman



SERENA ANDREW, Secretary