

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE

January 27, 1977

The Committee on Highways and Transportation was called to order on January 27, 1977, at 3:30 p.m. with Chairman Baeth presiding and all members were present.

The following bills were scheduled for discussion today: HB 131, HB 206, HB 222, HB 393, HJR 10.

HOUSE BILL 222

Representative Moore, chief sponsor of this bill, stated he had second thoughts regarding this bill and there is some other action coming from the Senate. I suggest that the committee table the bill.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 10

Representative Siefert, chief sponsor of this bill, displayed a bumper sticker which is being used to try to control the heavy accident rate on Highway 93. He also had a print-out (exhibit 1) showing accident data on this portion of the highway during 1974 and 1975. The portion of highway is 57 miles long.

Col. Sol, chief of the Highway Patrol Bureau, spoke on the patrol's accident prevention program. He stated there was heavy slow-moving vehicles in that area. He also mentioned the possibility of turn-out lanes.

Jim Beck, attorney from the Department of Highways, spoke on this resolution. He said the department neither supports nor opposes it. He stated that they see financial and legal problems.

Jack Beckert, Administrator of the Engineering Division of the Department of Highways, said it would take 43.7 million dollars to do this work. If it was done under the existing financial district law, this would take all the funds available to district 1 and 8 to finance. There is no question of the need for the new construction, but the fact remains that the funding should be addressed. Mr. Beckert said he believed it would be appropriate for the legislature to consider special funding. He stated they will abide by your decision.

The sponsor, Rep. Siefert, mentioned an amendment - to take out the words "divided driving lanes" on page 2, line 17.

In answer to a question, Mr. Beckert said it would be fairly easy to set priorities on a certain small section that is particularly bad, but it takes approximately five years to complete such construction. Perhaps safety funds could be used, but these are limited.

Col. Sol said that turnoffs should be every two miles or so to be effective. Mr. Beckert stated they would be expensive, because of the terrain.

HOUSE BILL 131

Representative Lund is chief sponsor of this bill. He stated that this bill has far reaching effects on people who need transplants.

Representative Brand is co-sponsor of this bill. He said the eye bank would also like to be included under this program.

Marshall Cook spoke on behalf of the WAMI Medical School Program of Montana State University. WAMI started a program called a Willed Body Program for people to will their bodies for medical education and research. They are in support of this bill.

Dr. Hiesterman of Helena spoke about the kidney donation program and distributed a report on it. He spoke in favor of this bill.

Captain Tooley of the Montana Highway Patrol said he was there to provide information. They see no objection to this bill. It will cause only a small change to the driver's license with no fiscal note needed.

Captain Tooley mentioned that the bill states that the information will be on the front of the license. We would like it to say that it will be on the license, but not where. Also they would like the bill to say this program will be effective upon renewal dates. This donor information on the license would be able to be changed at any time a person wants after the program begins.

Nancy Pierce, Dialysis Nurse, was present with some kidney patients: Bill Nelson, Mari Buerman and Judy Robinson. They told the committee about their personal experiences and their needs for transplants. They all spoke in favor of this bill.

Sharon Dieziger, from the Montana Nurses Association, spoke in favor of this bill. Howard Slack of the Montana Lions Club spoke in favor of it and said their club has an eye donor program.

Linda Buckland, an eye transplant patient, spoke in favor of this bill. Several of these proponents left reports or statements with the committee. Also a sample donor card was given to the chairman. All are marked exhibit 2.

There were no opponents.

HOUSE BILL 393

This bill was deferred until the February 1, 1977 meeting.

HOUSE BILL 206

Representative Courtney, chief sponsor, said this bill removes the law that motorcycle riders must wear helmets, if over 18 years of age. It does not prevent anyone from wearing one, however, if they wish. Representative Cooney, co-sponsor, also spoke in favor of this bill.

Proponents:

Rick Pylypuw, representing ABATE, gave out a report explaining their goals and showing statistics on motorcycle deaths. He said they believe helmets cause more harm than good because of loss of vision and hearing and also affects control of the bike. Also helmets are hot and uncomfortable in the summer.

Other ABATE members spoke in favor of this bill: Jim Burns, Daniel Watts, Terry Ward, Rex Suoboda, Russell Jones, Dusty Ryders, Dick Richardson, George Richardson, Mike Mazzola, and Ray Dotson.

Dan Verwolf, representing Bozeman's United Bikers, also spoke in favor of this bill. Also Ward Roadarmel.

Opponents:

Sgt. Ted Stollfus of the Montana Highway Patrol spoke in opposition of this bill. He feels helmets are not a deterrent in vision or hearing and they can save lives.

Jerry Loendorf, representing the Montana Medical Association, spoke in opposition of this bill. He gave some statistics on helmets saving lives and gave out a report on this. Accident victims affect everyone to some degree.

Albert Goke, of the Highway Traffic Safety Division of the Department of Community Affairs, spoke in opposition. He said they cannot agree that the consequences of injuries only affect the victim. He also gave the chairman a report on a survey regarding the issues of vision, hearing, neck injuries, etc.

There was a discussion held on the design of helmets.

All statements and reports on HB 206 were marked exhibit 3.  
Hearing closed on HB 206.

Rep. Kanduch moved to adjourn. Rep. Hansen seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

William R. Baeth  
William R. Baeth, Chairman