

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

February 22, 1977

The Highways and Transportation subcommittee meeting on HB 627 was called to order at 8:00 p.m. on February 22, 1977, by Chairman Tropila. Other subcommittee members present were Representative Baeth, Mular, O'Keefe and Keyser.

Jon Tovson, Great Falls City/County Board of Health, spoke as an opponent for this bill. He feels funding for these alcohol programs should come from alcohol tax. He said taxes on alcohol started in 1974 and this bill just increases the amount of tax. He feels it is correct that it be a user's tax.

Clint Grimes, Helena resident, spoke as an opponent for this bill. He said good aftercare for alcoholics costs money, but is effective. Also halfway houses are necessary. He doesn't feel the slight increase in price of liquor would matter very much to the public, but would do so much good in these programs.

Representative Ramierez spoke in favor of this bill. He spoke on behalf of the Rimrock Foundation in Billings, which is one of the programs that would benefit from the revenue of this bill. He said Rimrock is progressive in their programs and would like to see more revenue available. He also mentioned some amendments proposed by Rimrock Foundation to safeguard that foundation's other sources of revenue.

Bob Person, Montana Legislative Council, distributed some suggested amendments to HB 627 which includes the Rimrock Foundation amendments.

Opponent Elton Andrew, representing Montana Beer Wholesalers Association, said they recognize the problem of alcoholism, but they disagree with the premise that beer should be made to pay for the attempts to solve the problems of alcoholism. He feels all citizens are involved, not just a few. Everyone should help pay for these programs, not just a few. He said this bill establishes a division of alcohol and drug dependence. He feels that if the Department of Institutions deems this division necessary, it can be created by them without the mandate of the legislature. They further disagree with the earmarking of funds. This puts these funds out of the control of the legislature.

Opponent Phil Strobe, representing the Montana Tavern Association, said they oppose this bill. When the initial legislation was passed, the revenue was for funding of some local programs, not some state bureaucracy. HB 627 changes that original intent. It creates a state division. They feel Montana prices of liquor are excessive with relation to neighboring states. If HB 627 is passed, the prices go even higher. This might raise the prices so high that it becomes desirable to circumvent the state law, to some people.

Mike Murray, chief of Addictive Diseases Bureau of the Department of Institutions, said he was present to answer any questions of the committee. He said a budget was submitted per region for alcoholism programs:

Region I	\$481,532
Region II	1,021,087
Region III	600,000
Region IV	675,197
Region V	914,683

The administration of the division would cost \$185,000. This same amount is requested in the Appropriations Committee if this bill is not passed.

\$2.4 million is needed to operate Galen State Hospital. There are no federal grants.

Drug abuse programs have federal grants, but alcoholism cannot be included. All funds of HB 627 would be used for alcoholism programs only.

There are 20 programs presently. Under HB 627 it calls for the establishment of a residential treatment program similar to Galen in eastern Montana. This could be a private facility under contract. There are three counties who do not have alcoholism programs.

There are estimated 56,000 alcoholics in the state of Montana.

Hearing closed on HB 627.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Baeth called the executive session to order at 9:15 p.m. with 11 members present and Rep. Frates and Ernst absent.

House Bill 627 was discussed and Representative Keyser made a motion to adopt the suggested amendments drafted by Bob Person, researcher for the committee, except the first amendment. The 11 amendments would be renumbered 1 through 10. (See attached list).

The vote was unanimous, with the two representatives listed above absent. Motion carried.

Representative Keyser made a motion to adopt Bob Person's drafted amendment on section 16 of this bill. (It is included in the attached list). The vote was unanimous, with the two representatives listed above absent. Motion carried.

Representative Tropila made a motion to make the following amendment: On page 27, lines 6, 12 and 15, strike 15% and insert 10%. The vote was unanimous, with the two representatives listed above absent. Motion carried.

Representative Kanduch made a motion to make the following amendment: On page 27, line 17, change 2/3rds to 3/4ths. Also page 27, line 19, the 1/3 would be changed to 1/4. Also on page 28, line 21, the 1/3 would be changed to 1/4. The vote was 10 yes, with Rep. Hansen voting no. The two representatives listed above were absent. Motion carried.

Representative Tropila made a motion to make the following amendment: On page 29, lines 16 and 19, change \$1.75 to \$1.00. The vote was unanimous, with the two representatives listed above absent. Motion carried.

Representative O'Keefe made a motion of AS AMENDED DO PASS. The vote was 9 yes, with Rep. Mular and Kropp no. The two representatives listed above were absent. The motion carried.

The executive session ended at 10:15 p.m.

William R. Baeth
William R. Baeth, Chairman

