

HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

March 8, 1977

The Committee on Highways and Transportation was called to order on March 8, 1977, at 10:00 a.m. with Chairman Baeth presiding and all members present, except Rep. Tropila.

The following bills were scheduled for discussion today:
SB 94, SB 98, SB 103 and SB 133.

SENATE BILL 103

Senator Lockrem, chief sponsor of this bill, explained that this was introduced by request of the Department of Highways. Its purpose is to allocate state construction funds to match federal-aid off-system road funds.

Dean Zinnecker, representing the Montana Association of Counties, said they support this bill. \$3 million will probably be available for Montana for off-system roads. This bill provides that the governing body of cities will be consulted by the board of county commissioners on proposed projects using these funds. They also agree with the formula used for appropriating these funds to the areas.

Jim Beck, attorney for the Department of Highways, said this program was started in the interim since the last legislature. It represents the way it has been run for the last year and approves it continuing into the next biennium. If the state does receive these federal funds, the department wants the authorization to use them.

Section 32-2607 was explained to the committee, which is the basis for this bill.

There were no opponents. Hearing closed on SB 103.

SENATE BILL 98

Senator Hager, sponsor of this bill, said that it was introduced at the request of the Department of Highways. Its purpose is to amend section 32-2614 relating to funds for the replacement of unsafe bridges. Federal funds are available for the replacement of unsafe bridges on the basis of need.

When a county replaces a bridge because of unsafe conditions using these federal funds, they have to be repaid over the next few years, thus reducing funds available for other projects. As bridges are costly, this has a great impact.

Jim Beck, attorney for the Department of Highways, said there is a present pay-back provision. Since these bridges are replaced because of safety reasons, the department feels that it would be better for the financial districts to not have to pay back provisions in this area. This bill eliminates this pay-back provision in the case of unsafe bridge replacement. It does not affect new construction of bridges.

There were no opponents. Hearing closed on SB 98.

SENATE BILL 133

Senator Bergren, sponsor of this bill, said it was introduced by the request of the Department of Highways. It relates to the complicated fleet vehicle registration fees. The owner of a fleet must at the present time send in the fees with the registrations. Computation of the fee formula is complicated and there are some over-payments and under-payments, thus creating more paper work.

This bill removes the requirement that the fees must accompany the registration. When a fleet is registered, a statement is then issued to the owner showing the correct amount due.

Don Copley, chief of Collections and Licensing Bureau, Department of Highways, said this change was requested because of the administrative problem of the complicated fee formula and the wrong amounts being sent in. This way a statement can be issued and avoid any over-payments or under-payments.

There were no opponents. Hearing closed on SB 133.

SENATE BILL 94

Senator Healy is the sponsor of this bill. He could not be at this hearing. Representative Mular opened this bill up for the proponents and opponents to give their comments. He mentioned that this bill was introduced at the request of the Department of Highways.

Jim Beck, attorney for the Department of Highways, said this bill amends section 32-3928 so that it reads that the director of highways reviews any hearings regarding relocation payments. It now reads that the highway commission reviews the hearings. There has been only three hearings since 1970 so it is not a very active area, but federal regulations requires this change.

There were no opponents. Hearing closed on SB 94.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

SENATE BILL 94

Representative Keyser made a motion to be CONCURRED IN. This motion was unanimously carried. Rep. Tropila was absent.

Representative Mular will carry this bill through the House.

SENATE BILL 98

Representative O'Keefe made a motion to be CONCURRED IN. This motion was unanimously carried. Rep. Tropila was absent.

Representative Keyser will carry this bill through the House.

SENATE BILL 103

Representative O'Keefe made a motion to be CONCURRED IN. This motion was unanimously carried. Rep. Tropila was absent.

Representative Hansen will carry this bill through the House.

SENATE BILL 133

Representative O'Keefe made a motion to be CONCURRED IN. This motion was unanimously carried. Rep. Tropila was absent.

Representative O'Keefe will carry this bill through the House.

Representative Kanduch made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

William R. Baeth
William R. Baeth, Chairman